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Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is the fifty-second submitted pursuant to paragraph 17 of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014), paragraph 10 of resolution 2165 (2014), paragraph 5 of resolution 2191 (2014), paragraph 5 of resolution 2258 (2015), paragraph 5 of resolution 2332 (2016), paragraph 6 of resolution 2393 (2017) and paragraph 12 of resolution 2401 (2018), in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to report, every 30 days, on the implementation of the resolutions by all parties to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic.

2. The information contained herein is based on data available to agencies of the United Nations system[1] and from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and other relevant sources. Data from agencies of the United Nations system on their humanitarian deliveries have been reported for May 2018.

[1] Input provided by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Children's Fund, the International Organization for Migration, the World Food Programme, the World Health Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the United Nations Population Fund, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic, the Mine Action Service, the Department of Political Affairs and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

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II. Major developments

Box 1
Key points: May 2018

1. During the reporting period, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic solidified its control over eastern Ghutah and gained control of Yarmouk camp and surrounding areas, following sustained military operations that resulted in deaths, injuries and damage to civilian infrastructure in those locations. As a result, there has been a reduction in the number of people in besieged locations. Both eastern Ghutah and Yarmouk camp are now categorized as hard-to-reach areas for humanitarian organizations. Access to those areas remained unauthorized by the Government except for one visit made to eastern Ghutah by representatives of United Nations agencies in mid-May.

2. Some 35,000 people were displaced from northern Homs and southern Hama, and 9,650 others were displaced from Yalda, Babila and Bayt Saham, in Rif Dimashq, following local agreements providing for evacuations. The United Nations was not a party to those agreements, nor was it involved in the evacuations. In total, nearly 120,000 people are reported to have been displaced following local agreements since mid-March.

3. A large proportion of the population of eastern Ghutah, some 160,000 people, remained displaced across the Syrian Arab Republic throughout the reporting period, including an estimated 44,000 at sites for internally displaced persons in Rif Dimashq Governorate and some 40,000 who had been authorized to move out of those sites through a system of sponsorship, following security clearance. The Government reported that approximately 13,500 people had returned to eastern Ghutah by the end of May.

4. Reports of increased military operations in the south-western part of the Syrian Arab Republic raised concerns about further escalation in the area and related humanitarian consequences. Humanitarian organizations continued their contingency planning and response preparedness efforts, including through cross-border humanitarian operations.

5. In the north-western part of the country, the humanitarian response to the needs of people displaced to the Tall Rif'at area of Aleppo Governorate as a result of military operations in Afrin district, and to Nubl, Zahra', Fafin and surrounding villages, continued. Restrictions on the movement of people displaced from Afrin remained a concern, although some returns to Afrin district were reported in late May. Access for Damascus-based United Nations agencies and implementing partners from within the country to Afrin district itself remained cut off. Cross-border non-governmental organizations had regular access to Afrin district.

6. In Idlib Governorate, fighting between government forces and non-State armed opposition groups, as well as among non-State armed opposition groups, continued to be reported. The continued arrival of newly displaced people under evacuation arrangements in northern rural Homs, southern rural Hama and Yalda, Babila and Bayt Saham further stretched humanitarian response capacities and placed additional pressure on host communities in both Idlib and Aleppo Governorates.

7. United Nations humanitarian assistance reached millions of people in need, including more than 2.17 million who received food assistance through regular deliveries to government-controlled areas. Access to hard-to-reach and besieged areas remained challenging. Facilitation letters were provided for inter-agency convoys to

Talbisah and Tulul al-Humr. While those convoys proceeded on 30 May, United Nations personnel were not permitted to participate, on security grounds.

3. Since the adoption by the Security Council on 24 February 2018 of its resolution 2401 (2018), in which the Council demanded a cessation of hostilities, military conflict has continued in many parts of the Syrian Arab Republic. Throughout May, air strikes, artillery shelling and sniper fire were reported in the governorates of Aleppo, Idlib, Ladhiqiyah, Dayr al-Zawr, Homs, Hama, Damascus, Rif Dimashq, Dar'a and Qunaytirah as military operations continued between the Government and its allied forces, and non-State armed opposition groups. Sporadic clashes occurred between government forces and the Syrian Democratic Forces in Dayr al-Zawr Governorate.

4. The reporting period saw a reduction in the number of people in areas categorized as besieged as the Government regained control of Yarmouk camp, in southern Damascus Governorate, following sustained military operations that resulted in deaths, injuries and damage to civilian infrastructure. No United Nations access to Yarmouk camp was authorized by the Government during the reporting period, although the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was permitted to carry out a rapid needs assessment in neighbouring Yalda on 28 May. By the end of the reporting period, UNRWA had reported that Yarmouk camp itself, home to more than 160,000 people before the conflict, was largely empty and in ruins. According to the Agency's estimates, as few as 100 Palestine refugees remained inside the camp as of late May. The reporting period also saw a reduction in the number of people in areas categorized as hard to reach, as humanitarian access improved in a number of areas that had recently come under localized agreements.

5. Following military escalation in northern Homs and southern Hama Governorates, some 35,000 people were displaced after the conclusion of local agreements between representatives of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and non-State armed opposition groups. An additional 9,650 people were evacuated from Yalda, Babila and Bayt Saham, in Rif Dimashq. Those evacuees were transported to the north-western part of the country, where they were able to access humanitarian assistance delivered through cross-border operations. In addition, between 900 and 1,200 fighters of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and members of their families were evacuated to a desert area between the eastern part of Homs and western Dayr al-Zawr, and an estimated 400 family members of ISIL fighters were evacuated to north-western Syrian Arab Republic. The United Nations was not a party to these agreements, nor was it involved in the evacuations.

6. A significant proportion of the population of eastern Ghutah remained displaced throughout the reporting period, including an estimated 44,000 people in sites for internally displaced persons in Rif Dimashq Governorate and a similar number who had been authorized to move out of those sites through a system of sponsorship, following security clearance. An additional 66,365 people from eastern Ghutah remained in various locations in the north-western part of the country, following several rounds of evacuations in March and April. The Syrian authorities reported that some 13,500 people had returned to eastern Ghutah by the end of the reporting period.

7. United Nations personnel visited Saqba and Kafr Batna, in eastern Ghutah, on 14 May and observed the resumption of some services and commercial activity. However, damage to civilian infrastructure was extensive, with a clear need for a significant scaling-up of humanitarian assistance and protection activities. This visit

marked the first time that United Nations personnel had been granted access to eastern Ghutah since 15 March, when an inter-agency convoy delivered assistance for 26,100 people. Since then, assistance has been provided only through the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and other local organizations. The United Nations continued to call for expanded regular access to allow for needs to be fully assessed and for assistance to be further scaled up in eastern Ghutah, including in Duma.

8. Reports of significant military mobilization in the south-western part of the Syrian Arab Republic contributed to concerns about a further escalation in the area and related humanitarian consequences. Syrian forces were reported to have dropped flyers over various communities in Dar'a Governorate, calling on opposition fighters to enter into reconciliation agreements or face a military offensive. Humanitarian organizations continued their contingency planning and response preparedness efforts, drawing on cross-border assistance deliveries.

9. The humanitarian situation in Idlib Governorate remained of great concern during the reporting period, with air strikes, clashes between armed groups, overcrowding and severely stretched basic services contributing to the deepening of the suffering of both displaced people and host communities. Some 80,000 newly displaced people had arrived in Idlib between March and the end of the reporting period. Humanitarian organizations in the area reported that keeping pace with the growing needs was increasingly challenging, and cross-border assistance remained a critical part of efforts in that regard. Half of the 2.4 million people in Idlib are internally displaced, with many having had to flee more than once.

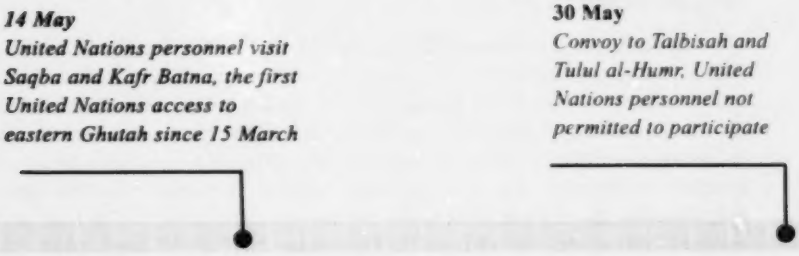
10. Turkish forces, along with Syrian non-State armed opposition groups affiliated with Operation Euphrates Shield, continued to carry out Operation Olive Branch in Afrin, in Aleppo Governorate. The United Nations and its partners continued to respond to the needs of people displaced from Afrin district to the Tall Rif'at area and to Nubl, Zahra', Fafin and surrounding villages. Efforts to register the displaced also continued in those locations. Restrictions on the movement of people displaced from Afrin remained a major concern, although several hundred vehicles were reportedly able to proceed to Afrin city through a crossing point in Ibin village between 21 and 26 May. Humanitarian access to Afrin district from within the Syrian Arab Republic has not yet received the necessary approvals from the Syrian authorities. Humanitarian organizations based in Turkey with access to Afrin district continued to provide assistance, including United Nations assistance. The United Nations and partners conducted a rapid needs assessment during the reporting period. Findings indicated that needs remained high, with most health-care facilities in rural areas closed, many service providers having fled the area and a large proportion of schools, markets and bakeries not yet functional, owing to the continued absence of staff, workers and tradespeople.

11. Diplomatic engagement by my Special Envoy for Syria to meaningfully relaunch the United Nations-facilitated Geneva process continued in May with representatives of the Astana guarantors, composed of Iran (Islamic Republic of), the Russian Federation and Turkey, and the Small Group of the Global Coalition, composed of France, Germany, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. My Special Envoy reminded interlocutors of the need for robust and proactive international dialogue and consensus to create the minimum conditions necessary for a credible political process.

12. Iran (Islamic Republic of), the Russian Federation and Turkey met in Astana on 14 and 15 May and agreed to hold joint consultations of their high-level representatives with my Special Envoy in order to create conditions to facilitate the beginning of the work of the constitutional committee in Geneva. Soon thereafter, my Special Envoy received an initial list of names for the constitutional committee from

the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. In addition, a second meeting of the Working Group on the release of detainees/abductees, the handover of bodies and the identification of missing persons was held, with the participation of the three Astana guarantors, the United Nations and experts from the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Figure I
Key dates in May 2018


14 May
United Nations personnel visit Saqba and Kafr Batna, the first United Nations access to eastern Ghutah since 15 March
30 May
Convoy to Talbisah and Tulul al-Humr, United Nations personnel not permitted to participate

13. Military campaigns against ISIL continued during the reporting period. The United States-led coalition increased offensive activity against ISIL throughout May, including on the Iraq-Syrian Arab Republic border. Fighting between government forces and ISIL in the areas of Yarmouk camp and Hajar al-Aswad, in southern Damascus, continued until a ceasefire deal was reportedly negotiated, followed by the evacuation of hundreds of ISIL fighters and civilians to the Syrian desert in Homs and Dayr al-Zawr Governorates. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic stated that it had reassumed its full authority over those areas, bringing under its control the entire capital and its surrounding areas. Government forces also continued their campaign against ISIL in Dayr al-Zawr Governorate, where government forces seized additional areas. The Syrian Democratic Forces continued their assault against ISIL in Dayr al-Zawr and Hasakah Governorates, where they gained additional territory. Non-State armed opposition groups battled ISIL in the western countryside of Dar'a Governorate.

Protection

14. Air and ground-based strikes continued to kill and injure civilians and to damage and destroy civilian infrastructure. Explosive weapons continued to be fired into populated areas, killing and injuring civilians and destroying and damaging vital infrastructure. Communities were littered with explosive hazards that killed and injured civilians and impeded humanitarian access. The use of improvised explosive devices in some areas added to the complexity of the explosive hazard threat. The many civilian casualties and the scale of the destruction of civilian infrastructure remained a strong indication that violations of the fundamental rules of distinction, proportionality and precaution, and in particular of the prohibition on the launching of indiscriminate attacks, continued.

15. During the conflict with ISIL, Raqqah city was littered by a complex array of explosive hazards, including unexploded ordnance, landmines and improvised explosive devices, that posed a direct risk to civilians and to humanitarian and construction workers. Explosive hazards remaining from conflict with ISIL continued

to be a major threat to civilians returning to Raqqah city as well as to humanitarian and construction workers, even though the number of victims diminished during the reporting period. United Nations partners saw an average of between 10 and 15 blast-related civilian injuries and deaths per week, down from 50 per week in late 2017. However, the number of child victims, especially boys, increased as a result of greater numbers of families returning and children playing outside in dangerous areas.

16. Fighting continued to have an impact on civilian infrastructure, including medical facilities, schools, markets and places of worship. On the basis of information received by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), civilian casualties occurred in various governorates, possibly in violation of international humanitarian law (see annex). OHCHR has documented alleged violations committed by parties to the conflict, including government forces and their allies, non-State armed opposition groups and their allies, and Security Council-designated terrorist groups.

17. In addition to violations documented by OHCHR, the Government provided the Office with information on alleged violations. The United Nations cannot independently verify those allegations. Three notes verbales, dated 2 May, were sent by the Syrian Arab Republic to OHCHR. In the first, the Syrian Arab Republic informed the Office of "civilian deaths and injured civilians, as a result of the terrorist attacks committed by the terrorist armed groups targeting the residential neighbourhoods of Damascus in the Syrian Arab Republic, using mortars and missiles mortars, during the period from 22 December 2017 to 22 April 2018. Those terrorist attacks with mortars amounted to 2,984 mortars, and resulted in 161 civilian deaths and 892 injured civilians". In the second note, it informed the Office of "shelling with mortars and missile attacks, perpetrated by terrorist armed groups, targeting the residential neighbourhoods of Almidan, Kfar Souseh, Nahr Eisheh, Azzahira, Alqadam and Daf Alshok in Damascus city in the Syrian Arab Republic, on the 25th, 27th and 28th of April 2018, which amounted to 13 mortars. Those terrorist attacks resulted in one civilian death and eight injured civilians, most of them children and women, as well as in physical damage to private and public property and infrastructures". In the third note, the Syrian authorities informed the Office of "shelling with mortars and missiles attacks, perpetrated by terrorist armed groups, targeting residential neighbourhoods of Nahr Eisheh, Sbeineh, Alqadam, Almidan, Azzahirah and Assayida Zeinab in Damascus city in the Syrian Arab Republic, on the 22nd, 23rd and 24th of April 2018, which amounted to 22 mortars. Those terrorist attacks resulted in seven civilian deaths and 40 injured civilians, most of them children and women, as well as in physical damage to private and public property and infrastructures". On 15 May, the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva sent another note verbale to OHCHR in which it informed the Office of "shelling with mortars and missiles attacks, and sniping cases perpetrated by terrorist armed groups, targeting residential neighbourhoods of Alqazaz, Daf Ashok, Commercial Bourj Damascus, Almaysat Square, Almidan and Azzahirah in Damascus city in the Syrian Arab Republic, from the 8th to the 11th of May 2018, which amounted to 10 mortars. Those terrorist attacks resulted in 5 civilian deaths and 26 injured civilians, most of them children and women, as well as in physical damage to private and public property and infrastructure". On 25 May, the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva sent an additional note verbale to OHCHR in which it informed the Office of "shelling with mortars and missiles attacks perpetrated by terrorist armed groups, targeting residential neighbourhoods of Victoria Bridge, Almidan, Asekh Mheddin and Azzahira in Damascus city in the Syrian Arab Republic, on the 16th and 17th of May 2018, which amounted to 5 mortars. Those terrorist attacks resulted in 2 civilian deaths and 32

injured civilians, most of them children and women, as well as in physical damage to private and public property and infrastructures".

18. Notwithstanding the call upon the Syrian authorities by the Human Rights Council, in its resolutions S-18/1 and 19/22, to cooperate with OHCHR, including through the establishment of a field presence with the mandate to protect and promote human rights, OHCHR reporting remained limited, given that the Government had not granted it access to the country.

19. The United Nations and its health partners verified two attacks impacting health-care facilities and personnel during the reporting period. On the morning of 2 May, health sector partners reported air strikes on the Specialized Hospital in Kafr Zayta town, in northern rural Hama. The air strikes resulted in the death of one staff member and caused massive damage to the hospital building. On 12 May, in Idlib city, a large explosion occurred in front of the Governorate Hospital, killing 12 people and injuring at least 60 others, in addition to causing damage to the hospital's intensive care unit and its emergency and children's departments. The hospital was closed as a result. Health partners also reported an alleged missile and barrel bomb attack on a makeshift hospital in Rastan city, in northern rural Homs Governorate. On 12 May, a mobile medical clinic was reportedly hit by fragments of a rocket-propelled grenade as it was parked in a garage beside the offices of a local non-governmental organization, which caused material damage.

20. Education facilities also continued to be affected by the fighting, with an attack carried out on 28 May on al-Bashaer College in Nawa city, in rural Dar'a Governorate, in which armed men entered the school through its roof before opening fire on students and teaching staff, injuring one student. Staff reported that the reason for the attack had been a refusal to pay fees demanded by the unidentified armed group. An additional attack was alleged to have taken place in Dana city, in northern rural Idlib Governorate, when a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device exploded near al-Sina'a School for Girls, resulting in a large fire. No casualties were reported in relation to the incident.

Humanitarian access

Box 2
Key points

1. United Nations humanitarian agencies and partners continued to reach millions of people in need, including from within the Syrian Arab Republic. Humanitarian assistance provided from within the country by United Nations agencies based in Damascus to regularly accessible locations in government-controlled areas reached more than 2.17 million people with food assistance through 2,180 deliveries.

2. Only two inter-agency humanitarian convoys of lifesaving relief, food and medical supplies were deployed in May, namely, to the hard-to-reach locations of Talbisah, in northern rural Homs, and Tulul al-Humr, in southern Hama. The Syrian Arab Red Crescent delivered United Nations multisectoral assistance for 92,750 people in those two locations. The convoys also delivered food assistance for 12,000 in nearby Jabiriyah village. United Nations personnel were not permitted to participate in the two convoys, because security approvals had not been received from the Syrian authorities.

3. Cross-border assistance, authorized under Security Council resolutions 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015) and 2393 (2017), remained a vital part of the humanitarian response. In May, 440 trucks (19 consignments) delivered lifesaving assistance to more than 1 million people through cross-border deliveries. The United

Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic continued its operations in Iraq, Jordan and Turkey.

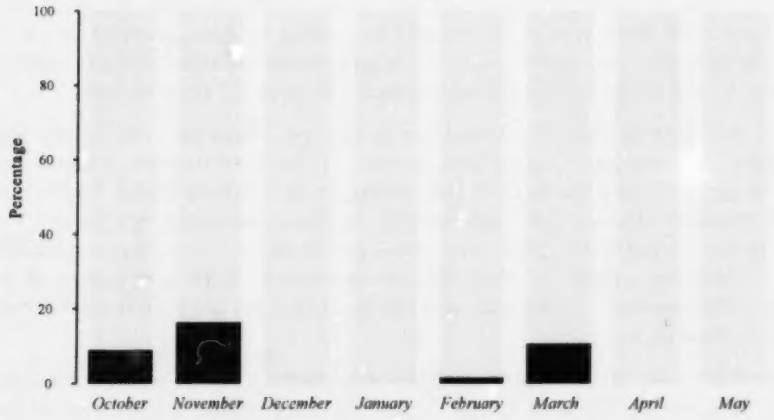
4. The United Nations estimates that, as at 30 May 2018, some 1.5 million people were living in hard-to-reach and besieged locations in the Syrian Arab Republic. That number included 8,100 people living in locations besieged by armed opposition groups (compared with 11,100 in April 2018), namely, Fu'ah and Kafraya, and 1,483,964 people living in hard-to-reach areas (compared with 2.04 million in April 2018). This update relates to the improvement of humanitarian access in a number of areas that recently came under localized agreements, as well as to recent changes in the lines of control in Yarmouk, following a military offensive by the Government and allied forces.

21. Under the United Nations inter-agency convoy plan for May and June, access was requested to 20 locations in besieged and hard-to-reach areas, with the objective of reaching 860,200 people. In May, two inter-agency convoys were authorized to deploy to the hard-to-reach locations of Talbisah, in Homs, and Tulul al-Humr, in Hama, providing multisectoral assistance to 92,750. Food assistance was also provided to 12,000 in nearby Jabiriyah village (see table 1). United Nations personnel were not permitted to participate, on security grounds.

Table 1
Inter-agency cross-line humanitarian convoys, May 2018

Date	*Location*	*Requested target (number of beneficiaries)*	*Number of beneficiaries reached*	*Type of assistance*
30 May	Talbisah and Tulul al-Humr	92 750	92 750	Multisectoral
30 May	Jabiriyah	12 000	12 000	Food

Figure II
Percentage of people reached each month in besieged areas through United Nations inter-agency cross-line humanitarian operations, October 2017–May 2018



22. The United Nations estimates that, as at 30 May 2018, approximately 8,100 people were living in besieged locations in the country (compared with 11,100 in April 2018), namely, Fu'ah and Kafraya, and 1.48 million people were living in hard-to-reach areas (compared with 2.04 million in April 2018). This update relates to the improvement of humanitarian access in a number of areas that recently came under localized agreements, as well as to recent changes in the lines of control in Yarmouk, following a military offensive by government and allied forces. An area is considered by the United Nations to be besieged when it is surrounded by armed actors, with the sustained effect that civilians, including the sick and the wounded, cannot leave it on a regular basis and humanitarian assistance cannot regularly enter it. The two remaining besieged locations in the Syrian Arab Republic are besieged by non-State armed opposition groups.

Figure III
Inter-agency cross-line humanitarian operations, May 2018

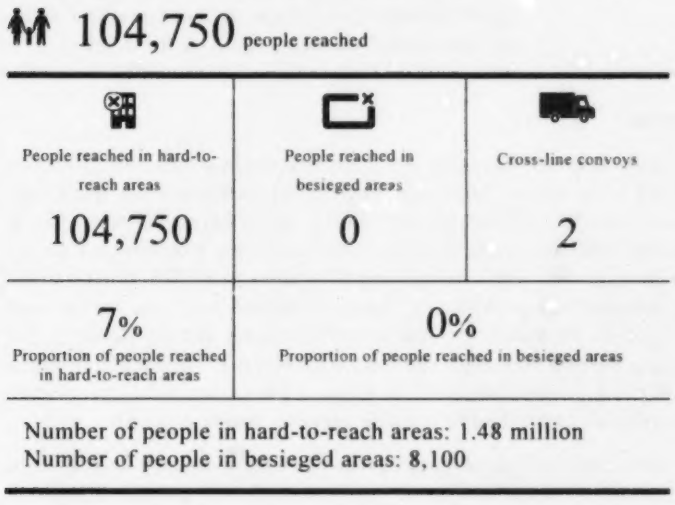


Table 2
Besieged locations, May 2018

Governorate	*Location*	*Population*	*Besieged by*
Idlib	Fu'ah	5 900	Non-State armed opposition groups
Idlib	Kafraya	2 200	Non-State armed opposition groups
Total		**8 100**	

23. Lifesaving and life-sustaining medical items sufficient for more than 100 treatments were rejected or removed from the inter-agency convoy to Talbisah and Tulul al-Humr in May, according to the World Health Organization. Details regarding the treatments and supplies removed are shown in table 3.

Table 3
Medical supplies removed from humanitarian convoys, May 2018

Location	*Number of treatments*	*Types of supplies*
Talbisah and Tulul al-Humr	100	Oxytocin injection 10 international units in 1 ml ampoule; ketamine hydrochloride USP, equivalent to ketamine 50 mg/ml vial; Triprolidine hydrochloride 1.25 mg + pseudoephedrine hydrochloride 30 mg + guaiphenesin 100 mg/5 ml syrup; dobutamine hydrochloride 280 mg, equivalent to dobutamine base 250 mg/20 ml vial; Gelofusine colloidal plasma volume substitute solution for infusion; 4 per cent w/v succinylated gelatin in saline; IV plastic container; Ecoflac plus in 500 ml bottle; electric operation table with advanced options; Phenobarbitone; reduced in quantity: syringe Luer 5 ml, disposable; Heparine Medis; adrenaline 1 mg/1 ml ampoule; sterile hypodermic syringe without needle for single use, 5 ml; salbutamol 0.2 per cent, solution for inhalation, by M&G/Syria.

Humanitarian response

24. United Nations humanitarian agencies and partners reached millions of people in need through all available access routes, including: (a) humanitarian operations from within the Syrian Arab Republic, whereby humanitarian deliveries reach those in need without crossing conflict lines; (b) cross-line convoys, whereby assistance from within the country is delivered across conflict lines; and (c) cross-border deliveries, whereby assistance is provided to those in need from Iraq, Jordan and Turkey (see tables 1 and 2). In addition to the United Nations and its partners, the Government and non-governmental organizations continued to deliver lifesaving assistance to people in need. Local authorities in many areas controlled by non-State armed opposition groups also continued to provide services where possible.

25. Individual agencies continued to submit requests for single-agency deliveries to locations across the country. Such deliveries are undertaken by United Nations agencies based in Damascus to regularly accessible areas. In May, all of the 2,180 official requests submitted by the World Food Programme to the Syrian authorities to obtain facilitation letters for the transport of food assistance to locations across the country were approved. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) submitted 32 requests for facilitation letters for the movement of core relief items and livelihood kits, all of which were approved. More than 1,177,000 children and mothers were reached with primary health-care and immunization services during May. In addition, an estimated 721,000 children and pregnant and lactating women were provided with nutritional supplements and services. A total of 200,000 children benefited from essential learning materials and remedial education, and 215,000 children benefited from protection and psychosocial support services. Approximately 2.82 million people received food assistance and 1.83 million benefited from water, sanitation and hygiene services and supplies.

Table 4
People reached by the United Nations and other organizations through all modalities, May 2018

Organization	*Number of people reached*
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	8 400
International Organization for Migration	39 000
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	2 711 000
United Nations Children's Fund	3 500 000
United Nations Development Programme	422 000
United Nations Population Fund	270 000
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	291 000
World Food Programme	2 820 000
World Health Organization	698 000

26. Military escalation in eastern Ghutah ceased during the reporting period. As a result of the fighting in earlier months, some 160,000 were displaced, with approximately 44,000 staying at nearby sites for internally displaced persons in May and a similar number of people authorized to move out of those sites through a system of sponsorship, following security clearance. Moreover, according to the Syrian authorities, some 13,500 people had moved back to eastern Ghutah as of late May. Humanitarian access to assist civilians in need in eastern Ghutah remained challenging. The United Nations did not receive permission to conduct needs assessments or deliver humanitarian assistance inside the enclave. A high level mission of heads of agencies was allowed to visit Saqba and Kafr Batna, in eastern Ghutah, on 14 May; however, a full assessment of needs has yet to be authorized. Assistance has been provided by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and other local partners. In addition, the United Nations continued to provide assistance to displaced people at displacement sites in Rif Dimashq and to evacuees in Idlib and northern Aleppo Governorates through implementing partners.

27. Following military escalation in northern Homs, the local agreement between the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and non-State armed opposition groups was implemented in the beginning of May, with approximately 35,000 people evacuated to Idlib and Aleppo Governorates. An estimated 217,500 people remained in the area, and the United Nations was unable to access the area on a regular basis. On 30 May, however, the United Nations provided assistance through two inter-agency convoys to the hard-to-reach areas of Talbisah and surrounding villages in Homs, as well as to Tulul al-Humr, in Hama Governorate. The distributions were conducted by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, owing to the fact that United Nations personnel were not permitted to participate in the convoys, lacking the necessary approval from the Syrian authorities for security reasons.

28. An estimated 134,000 people remained displaced from Afrin district in the Tall Rif'at, Nubl, Zahra' and Fafin areas of Aleppo Governorate. People displaced from Afrin to Tall Rif'at and other areas have largely been accessible to humanitarian organizations operating from Aleppo. Humanitarian access to Afrin city from within the Syrian Arab Republic has not yet received the necessary approvals from the Syrian authorities. While some United Nations food and health-care assistance has been delivered across the border, assistance was arranged in cooperation with the Turkish authorities in these areas.

29. In Raqqah, an estimated 132,000 people have returned to Raqqah city since the withdrawal of ISIL. Most returnees have settled in areas with comparatively less infrastructure damage and explosive hazard contamination. Scaling up the humanitarian response and capacity has been challenging because of the high levels of contamination from mines and unexploded ordnance, which pose significant threats to the returnees and humanitarian workers. A United Nations needs assessment conducted on 1 April found extensive damage to infrastructure (80 per cent of buildings damaged or destroyed) and significant gaps in assistance and basic services. While the position of the United Nations remains that conditions are not safe for return, assistance is now being scaled up on the basis of the assessment findings, largely through non-governmental organization partners present in the city. A total of 11 non-governmental organizations are providing multisectoral assistance, of which 3 have opened offices in the city. No United Nations missions took place during the reporting period.

30. Cross-border deliveries continued from Iraq, Jordan and Turkey under the terms of resolutions 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016) and 2393 (2017) (see figure IV and table 3). In line with those resolutions, the United Nations notified the Syrian authorities in advance of each shipment, including its contents, its destination and the number of beneficiaries expected to be reached.

31. The United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic continued its operations authorized under resolutions 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015) and 2393 (2017) in Iraq, Jordan and Turkey. During the reporting period, the Mechanism monitored the delivery of 19 consignments by seven United Nations agencies, consisting of 440 trucks, from the three border crossings: 10 from Bab al Hawa (305 trucks), 6 from Bab al-Salam (76 trucks) and 3 from Ramtha (59 trucks). There were no concerns or questions about the humanitarian nature of the consignments sent. The United Nations provided 48-hour notice to the Government regarding all shipments. Once in the country, United Nations partners ensured that shipments arrived at the designated warehouses. Independent third-party companies contracted by the United Nations ensured independent verification of the assistance arriving at the warehouses and monitored the distribution and/or service provision. The Mechanism continued to benefit from the excellent cooperation of the Governments of Iraq, Jordan and Turkey.

32. Since cross-border operations began in July 2014, following the adoption of resolution 2165 (2014), the United Nations has conducted more than 818 cross-border consignments, with more than 20,679 trucks (13,987 through Bab al-Hawa and 2,131 through Bab al-Salam from Turkey; 4,539 through Ramtha from Jordan; and 22 through Ya'rubiyah from Iraq). Those operations complement and support the aid provided by international and Syrian non-governmental organizations that provide services to millions more from neighbouring countries.

33. During the reporting period, the United Nations and its implementing partners delivered food assistance to more than 1 million people from three cross-border entry points through Turkey and Jordan. Moreover, the United Nations conducted health and medical deliveries, providing nearly 370,000 treatments through the cross-border mechanism. In the northern part of the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) delivered winter kits, child protection assistance, nutrition, education, health and water, sanitation and hygiene supplies through a number of cross-border shipments. Almost 100,000 people were reached with water, sanitation and hygiene supplies and interventions. More than 37,800 children and adults received several emergency services, including mine risk education, which was delivered to internally displaced persons and host populations in schools and camps, while psychosocial support, case management services and parenting programmes were delivered in child-friendly spaces and community outreach programmes. More

than 398,500 children and women of child-bearing age received access to primary health-care services. Some 800,000 children under the age of 5 had access to immunization services. Curative and preventive nutritional interventions were delivered to 81,470 children under the age of 5 and to 35,131 pregnant and lactating women in north-western Syrian Arab Republic (Aleppo, Idlib and Hama). Approximately 69,662 children between the ages of 6 and 59 months and 11,519 pregnant and lactating women were screened for acute malnutrition using mid-upper-arm circumference. Out of the screened children and women, 683 children were found to be severely acutely malnourished and were referred for appropriate treatment. A total of 21,513 pregnant and lactating women received education/counselling on optimal childcare and feeding practices.

34. In the southern parts of the Syrian Arab Republic, more than 440,000 people benefited from improved access to clean water through the operation and maintenance of water and sanitation systems. Of those people, more than 50,360 received emergency water, sanitation and hygiene interventions, including with regard to household water treatment, the provision of hygiene kits, and the rehabilitation and repair of sanitation facilities. UNICEF partners also continued to provide lifesaving nutritional services to beneficiaries in 13 communities in Dar'a and Qunaytirah Governorates. More than 4,000 children (2,034 boys and 1,974 girls) under the age of 5 were screened for acute malnutrition. Of those screened, 20 children (8 boys and 12 girls) were diagnosed with severe acute malnutrition. The detected cases were enrolled in the therapeutic and supplementary nutritional programme and received the required nutritional interventions from six health centres and one mobile clinic. Preventive nutritional services were also provided for 2,638 children under the age of 5, and 880 pregnant and lactating women received micronutrient supplementation to prevent or treat micronutrient deficiencies. In addition, 2,5[illegible] pregnant and lactating women received counselling services with respect to infant and young child feeding practices. More than 1,000 children (544 boys and 515 girls) benefited from structured and sustained child protection and psychosocial support services, and 24 children (9 boys and 15 girls) were put under case management. A total of 45 individuals (6 men and 39 women) received support in the area of parental care and engagement through parenting programmes. In addition, more than 6,000 individuals benefited from initiatives to raise awareness about child protection issues.

35. UNHCR and its partners continued to enhance the response to the protection needs of internally displaced persons, returnees and other crisis-affected populations. By the end of May, 15,545 protection interventions had been conducted, reaching 384,413 individuals, including 317,109 benefiting from general protection activities, 4,483 benefiting from child protection activities and 62,821 reached through more than 2,388 awareness-raising campaigns across 12 governorates on the prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence. As at 31 May 2018, the total number of functioning UNHCR-funded community centres and mobile units stood at 95 community centres, 17 satellite centres and 76 mobile units, supported by 2,178 outreach volunteers. This network provided protection-related services, including community mobilization, child protection, legal aid, the prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence, livelihood services, and services for persons with specific needs, to benefit some 2.6 million internally displaced persons, returnees, host communities and other crisis-affected people across 12 Syrian governorates. In May, 60,160 internally displaced persons in Damascus, Rif Dimashq, Suwayda, Dar'a, Qunaytirah, Tartus, Ladhiqiyah, Homs, Hama, Aleppo and Hasakah were direct beneficiaries of the UNHCR legal assistance programme, including counselling; awareness sessions on various legal topics, including civil documentation and women's rights; and lawyers' direct interventions before courts and administrative bodies. Moreover, the United Nations Population Fund reached more than 270,000 people, carrying out activities relating to reproductive health and

the prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence and youth-related violence. Also during the reporting period, UNRWA distributed a total of 64,322 food parcels to 125,598 Palestine refugees. In addition, the second round of cash distributions for 2018 started on 13 May 2018; by 31 May, a total of 241,864 individuals had received cash assistance through the regular cash distribution round. In addition, 2,822 Palestine refugees displaced from Yarmouk and eastern Ghutah benefited from a one-time payment of $70 per family.

Figure IV
Number of beneficiaries assisted by the United Nations and its partners by cluster through cross-border humanitarian deliveries, May 2018

(Thousands)

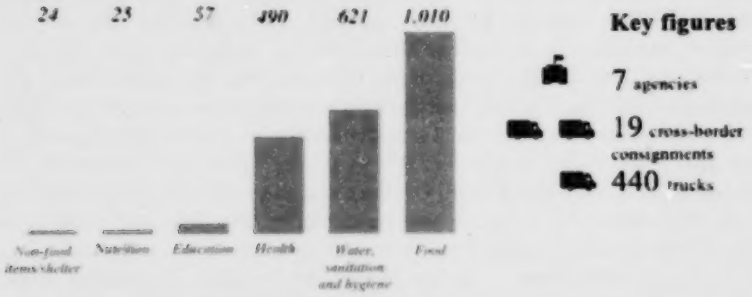


Table 5
Number of beneficiaries targeted through cross-border deliveries by sector and by district, May 2018

Governorate	*District*	*Education*	*Food*	*Health*	*Non-food items/shelter*	*Nutrition*	*Water, sanitation and hygiene*
Aleppo	Bab	–	10 800	–	3 000	–	15 000
Aleppo	I'zaz	–	142 220	89 300	–	–	27 495
Aleppo	Jarabulus	–	10 200	–	1 860	–	1 945
Aleppo	Jabal Sim'an	9 070	246 100	–	224	–	–
Dar'a	Sanamayn	340	10 010	–	–	–	38 000
Dar'a	Dar'a	15 432	24 285	150 186	1 800	25 000	254 145
Dar'a	Izra'	17 190	8 230	1 596	1 080	–	120 470
Hama	Muhradah	–	2 700	–	–	–	–
Idlib	Ma'arrah	–	117 115	–	–	–	–
Idlib	Ariha	–	47 500	–	–	–	–
Idlib	Harim	–	316 700	248 700	14 800	–	86 755
Idlib	Idlib	10 120	52 100	–	–	–	3 500
Idlib	Jisr al-Shughur	–	15 600	–	834	–	–
Qunaytirah	Fiq	–	292	–	–	–	6 000
Qunaytirah	Qunaytirah	4 841	6 155	–	–	–	67 400

36. The Russian Federation sent informational bulletins to the United Nations from the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic, which outlined the provision of bilateral relief assistance. Other Member States also continued to provide bilateral and other forms of humanitarian assistance.

Visas and registrations

37. A total of 47 new United Nations visa requests were submitted to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic in May. Of these, 15 were approved and 32 remained pending. Of the 114 new visa applications submitted in March and April 2018, 95 were approved in April and 9 in May, while 10 remained pending. A total of 85 United Nations visa renewal requests were submitted in May, of which 61 were approved, 1 was rejected and 23 remained pending. An additional 26 requests for visa renewals submitted in April were approved in May. For some United Nations entities in the Syrian Arab Republic, a significant number of staff are not yet in place or cannot be replaced owing to the non-issuance of visas for months, formal requests notwithstanding.

38. A total of 23 international non-governmental organizations are registered with the Government to operate in the country.

Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and premises

39. Agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system continued to implement programmes in areas affected by frequent clashes among parties to the conflict, air strikes, the regular exchange of indirect artillery fire and asymmetrical attacks. As a result of activities relating to the armed conflict, significant areas of operation became highly contaminated with unexploded ordnance, explosive remnants of war and landmines, which pose an elevated risk to the implementation of United Nations activities in those areas.

40. Since the beginning of the conflict, dozens of humanitarian workers have been killed, including: 22 staff members of the United Nations and organizations of the United Nations system, 18 of whom were staff members of UNRWA; 66 staff members and volunteers of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent; and 8 staff members and volunteers of the Palestine Red Crescent Society. Many staff members of international and national non-governmental organizations are also reported to have been killed.

41. A total of 25 staff members of agencies and programmes of the United Nations system (1 staff member of the United Nations Development Programme and 24 UNRWA staff members) are being detained or are missing.

III. Observations

42. In the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Nations and its partners are running the world's largest humanitarian operation. It continues to save lives every day. In 2017, multisectoral aid operations reached an average of at least 7.8 million people in need each month. That said, I am deeply concerned by the negative trajectory of humanitarian access in the Syrian Arab Republic this year. As I have stated before, 2018 has seen what can be described only as a collapse in the ability of the United Nations and its humanitarian partners to reach people across conflict lines from within the Syrian Arab Republic. The scale of needs remains immense, with more than 13 million Syrians in need, of whom nearly 1.5 million are located in hard-to-reach and besieged areas across the country. These people — in places such as northern rural Homs, Duma, Fu'ah, Kafraya and southern Damascus — are some of the most desperate in the country. Just eight inter-agency convoys have reached some of these areas so far this year, providing humanitarian assistance to only 273,000 people. That is a mere fraction of the number of people whom the United Nations and its partners intended to reach under the bimonthly humanitarian convoy plans. Facilitating rapid and unimpeded humanitarian assistance for civilians in need is a legal obligation of all parties to the conflict. It is an important and irrefutable tenet of international

humanitarian law, which the Security Council, in its resolution 2165 (2014) and subsequent resolutions, seeks to implement. I again ask for the support of all Member States to ensure that humanitarian assistance can be provided in a rapid, safe, unimpeded and sustained manner to those who are in the greatest need.

43. Humanitarian needs remain staggering. Renewed international engagement in support of principled humanitarian action in the Syrian Arab Republic is critical. To translate the determination expressed at successive conferences in Kuwait, London and Brussels, we urgently need to see all pledges to the United Nations-coordinated appeals for the Syrian Arab Republic and the region turned into contributions, including through the pooled funds that provide direct support to front-line responders. The United Nations and its partners remain committed to delivering prioritized, needs-based, lifesaving assistance and protection across the Syrian Arab Republic.

44. Although the number of people in besieged and hard-to-reach areas has been reduced, significant protection concerns remain. Besieged areas have come under government control after prolonged periods of heavy fighting and restricted humanitarian assistance following local agreements providing for the relocation of thousands of people, under difficult conditions. The United Nations is not a party to these agreements, nor is it involved in evacuations. I once again urge all parties to refrain from any action that might force civilians to flee their habitual residence.

45. The creation of a calm, safe and neutral environment across the Syrian Arab Republic that will enable all Syrians to express confidence in a political process is paramount. In that context, de-escalation must remain a priority. I continue to urge parties to act with restraint, in accordance with international law, and to avoid escalatory acts that could worsen the suffering of the Syrian people. I continue to express my alarm at provocative actions that risk a new conflagration in the region, and call upon regional actors to exercise maximum restraint. Moreover, all parties to armed conflict must respect civilians and civilian objects, including civilian infrastructure, and take constant care to spare them throughout their military operations.

46. I reiterate that those responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law must be held accountable. Such a step is central to achieving sustainable peace in the Syrian Arab Republic. I also reiterate my call for the situation in the country to be referred to the International Criminal Court, and call upon all parties to the conflict, all States, civil society and the United Nations system as a whole to cooperate fully with the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011. I also strongly encourage the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, in line with Human Rights Council resolutions S-18/1 and 19/22, to cooperate with OHCHR, including through the establishment of a field presence with the mandate to protect and promote human rights. Similarly, in line with Human Rights Council resolution S-17/1 and subsequent resolutions, I call on the Syrian Government to allow the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic access to the Syrian Arab Republic in order to carry out its work.

47. There is no military solution: the United Nations-facilitated political process remains the only viable avenue for a sustainable end to conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic. My Special Envoy will continue his efforts to meaningfully relaunch the United Nations-facilitated political process and to establish a constitutional committee, with the final agreement on its mandate, terms of reference, powers and rules of procedure and the selection criteria for its composition reached under United

Nations auspices in Geneva, and engage all relevant parties to that end, as he exercises his prerogative within the framework of Security Council resolution 2254 (2015). The efforts of the international community, including members of the Security Council, to end the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic are critical.

Annex

Incidents affecting civilians, recorded by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, May 2018*

Damascus and Rif Dimashq Governorates

- On 9 May, one civilian man and his wife were reportedly killed and one civilian was injured when strikes hit an area in western Rif Dimashq Governorate. The victims were reportedly from the Shaykh Miskin area of Dar'a Governorate, driving their vehicle close to where the strike hit as they were driving from Izra' city, in Dar'a, to Damascus city.
- On 9 May, unidentified strikes hit various residential areas in Damascus city and allegedly resulted in civilian casualties, in addition to damage to infrastructure. Between 1100 and 1130, explosions hit "Damascus tower 18" and the Maysat roundabout in Damascus city, reportedly killing 3 civilians and injuring at least 23 others. The strikes reportedly resulted in significant damage to infrastructure and several vehicles in the area.
- On 16 May at around 1100, ground-based strikes reportedly hit a residential area near the Awqaf building, in the vicinity of the Victoria Bridge in Damascus city, reportedly killing 11 civilians and injuring at least 11 others.
- On 18 May, strikes hit the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)-held area of Hajar al-Aswad in southern Damascus and reportedly killed three civilian women.
- On 18 May, strikes hit the ISIL-held Yarmouk refugee camp area in southern Damascus and reportedly killed two civilian women and a 6-year-old boy.

Dar'a Governorate

- On 3 May, strikes hit the opposition-held city of Harak, in eastern Dar'a, reportedly killing one civilian and injuring at least two others.
- On 9 May at around 2030, strikes hit the neighbourhood of Arba'in in the opposition-held Dar'a al-Balad, in Dar'a city, reportedly killing two civilian women and a 2-year-old child and injuring at least six other civilians, including one woman and four children.
- On 17 May, one male journalist was reportedly killed when strikes hit a residential area in the opposition-held town of Sayda, in eastern Dar'a.
- On 22 May, one male civilian was reportedly killed as a result of small arms fire exchanged between different armed opposition groups in Jallayn town, in western Dar'a.

* In line with Security Council resolution 2258 (2015), the present description of developments on the ground and the incidents that occurred during the month that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has been able to corroborate relates to compliance with Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) by all parties in the Syrian Arab Republic. The information is provided without prejudice to the work of the Task Force on the Ceasefire of the International Syria Support Group. The reporting is not a comprehensive listing of all violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of international human rights law that took place in the Syrian Arab Republic during the reporting period.

Aleppo Governorate

- On 4 May, a piece of unexploded ordnance detonated in one of the streets in the opposition-held town of Darat Izzah, in western Aleppo, reportedly killing two civilians.
- On 4 May, mortar rounds hit a residential area in the Shahba' neighbourhood of government-held Aleppo city and reportedly injured at least three civilians.
- On 5 May, a piece of unexploded ordnance detonated in one of the streets in the opposition-held town of Hayyan, in northern Aleppo Governorate, reportedly killing two children.
- On 4 May at around 2200, a prominent armed opposition fighter from the Hamza Division in Bab city, in north-eastern Aleppo, raided the private al-Hikmah Hospital along with a number of other fighters and reportedly physically assaulted two male nurses and one female nurse over a delay in providing medical assistance to one of the assailant's relatives. Shots were fired in the air, and the hospital had to close down and temporarily transfer all staff and operations to the nearby al-Salam Hospital in the city. On 5 May at around 0500, the hospital staff were reportedly attacked again while at the al-Salam Hospital by the same perpetrators, and one male nurse was allegedly beaten. The attacks provoked anger in the community, and civilians approached the local "police" headquarters, demanding that action be taken against the perpetrators. The Turkish army reportedly intervened to try to control the situation. The perpetrators were reportedly turned in to the "police" by the Hamza Division on 5 May, but released a few days later.
- On 6 May, armed clashes using both light and heavy weapons reportedly erupted between armed opposition fighters from the Ahrar al-Sharqiya and Ahrar al-Sham armed opposition groups in Bab city. The eruption of violence came a few hours after the alleged murder of 10 male civilian internally displaced persons from Dayr al-Zawr Governorate who had recently arrived in Bab city along with other internally displaced persons from the Qalamun area of Rif Dimashq Governorate. The 10 murdered civilians had reportedly been shot in the head at a checkpoint, in the vicinity of the Centre roundabout, set up by armed members of the Waki family, which has links to armed opposition groups. Reports received by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) confirmed that several checkpoints had been erected by Ahrar al-Sharqiya and Ahrar al-Sham, which exchanged fire and imposed movement restrictions on civilians. The armed clashes reportedly resulted in the killing of three civilians, including one woman, and the injury of 19 other civilians, including women and children.
- On 6 May, mortar rounds hit residential areas in the Nile Street, Mashru' 3000 and Hamdaniyah neighbourhoods of government-held Aleppo city, reportedly killing one civilian woman and injuring seven other civilians.
- On 11 May, an improvised explosive device detonated inside a house in the Ma'adi neighbourhood of government-held Aleppo city, reportedly killing three civilians and injuring at least three others.
- On 21 May, one civilian — an internally displaced person from Jindayris town, in Afrin district in north-western Aleppo — was reportedly killed when armed fighters from the People's Protection Units manning one of the checkpoints in Beneh village, in Shirawa district in northern Aleppo, fired in the air in an attempt to prevent dozens of civilians gathered at the checkpoint from returning to Afrin district.

- On 24 May at around 1900, an improvised explosive device attached to a motorbike detonated in the middle of a marketplace on Ra'i Street in opposition-held Bab city and reportedly injured 12 civilians, including 4 children.
- On 30 May, armed clashes erupted between two armed opposition groups in Bab city and reportedly injured three civilians.
- On 31 May, an improvised explosive device attached to a motorbike detonated in a busy shopping area in Jarabulus city, in eastern rural Aleppo Governorate, reportedly killing at least four civilians, including two children, and injuring a number of other civilians.

Idlib and Hama Governorates

- On 2 May at around 1500, strikes hit a residential area in the opposition-held village of Mishmishan, in western rural Idlib. The strike destroyed a one-storey home, reportedly killing six civilians (three women and three children) from the same family.
- On 2 May at around 1000, strikes hit the Specialized Hospital in the opposition-held town of Kafr Zayta, in northern Hama, reportedly killing one civilian female staff member and injuring five other civilian staff. The hospital reportedly sustained significant damage and was closed down.
- On 3 May, a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device detonated in the vicinity of the International Rescue Committee building on the road between the opposition-held cities of Dana and Sarmada, in northern Idlib, reportedly killing 4 civilians, including 1 woman and 1 Committee staff member, and injuring 10 other civilians. The explosion caused significant damage to the building.
- On 4 May at around 2200, strikes hit a residential area in opposition-held Naqir village, in southern Idlib, reportedly killing 4 civilians, including 2 women and 1 child, and injuring 12 other civilians. The strikes reportedly caused significant damage to several houses in the area.
- On 6 May at around 1530, strikes hit the Qal'ah residential neighbourhood in opposition-held Jisr al-Shughur city, in western Idlib, reportedly killing four civilians, including one woman, and injuring five other civilians. The strikes caused significant damage to several buildings in the neighbourhood.
- On 8 May at around 1300, strikes hit a residential area in opposition-held Naqir village, in southern Idlib, reportedly killing three children and injuring three other civilians, including one woman and one child, all from the same family.
- On 9 May at around 2000, strikes hit a residential area in opposition-held Ma'arr Zaytah village, in southern Idlib, reportedly killing nine civilians from one family, including two women and six children.
- On 12 May at around 2030, a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device detonated in the vicinity of the Justice Palace in the opposition-held city of Idlib, reportedly killing 14 men and injuring 28 others. OHCHR received the names of only seven of the victims. The attack was allegedly targeting a prison operated by the Levant Liberation Organization inside the Justice Palace building. Preliminary information indicated that many of those killed were ISIL fighters who had been held by the Levant Liberation Organization, with other unconfirmed reports indicating that non-conflict-related prisoners held in the prison were also killed. The attack reportedly resulted in significant damage to the building, neighbouring houses and a nearby health-care facility known as the Governorate Hospital.

- On 15 May at around 1000, a strike hit a residential area in the opposition-held city of Ariha, in southern Idlib, reportedly killing two female children.
- On 16 May at around 0900, an unidentified explosion hit two cars driving along an agricultural road near opposition-held Mansura village, in north-western Hama, reportedly killing six civilians, including one child and four women.
- On 22 May at around 1000, unidentified armed men on motorbikes reportedly opened fire on a bus that was transporting civilians from government-held Aqrab village, in south-western Hama, to the adjacent government-held village of Kafr Qadah, reportedly killing three civilian passengers and injuring seven others. The bus came under attack while they were allegedly travelling to a "settlement centre" located in Kafr Qadah, approximately 8 km east of Aqrab, in order to "settle" their situation as required under a local agreement reached between armed opposition groups, on the one hand, and the Governments of the Syrian Arab Republic and the Russian Federation, on the other. Aqrab village had been taken over by the government forces and their allies on 2 May, after the agreement.
- On 26 May at around 1200, a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device detonated in a residential area known as Street 30, in the opposition-held city of Idlib, reportedly killing four civilians, including two children, and injuring scores of others. The explosion caused significant damage to several buildings in the area.
- On 30 May at around 0030, a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device detonated in a street in the opposition-held city of Dana, in northern Idlib Governorate, with no casualties reported. Shortly thereafter, as civil defence first responders were extinguishing a fire, another improvised explosive device detonated at the location, reportedly injuring four civilians, including three civil defence staff members.
- On 31 May at around 1230, an unidentified explosion hit and destroyed a three-storey building in the Maydan neighbourhood of the opposition-held city of Ariha, in southern Idlib Governorate, reportedly killing three children from the same family and injuring two other children and two civilian women.

Hasakah Governorate

- On 1 May at dawn, air strikes hit several homes in ISIL-held Fadil village, in the vicinity of the Tall al-Jabir area of southern Hasakah Governorate, reportedly killing at least 21 civilians, including 6 women and 13 children from two families.
- On 11 May, strikes hit a residential area in the ISIL-held Hammadi village, in the Abu Hamda area of southern Hasakah, and reportedly killed eight civilians (five women and three children) from one family.

Raqqah Governorate

- On 12 May between 1000 and 1100, a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device detonated in the vicinity of the Sa'a roundabout in the centre of the Syrian Democratic Forces-held city of Raqqah, reportedly killing two civilians and injuring at least three others.

Dayr al-Zawr Governorate

- On 21 May, two children, 16 and 12 years old, were killed as a result of the detonation of a piece of unexploded ordnance on a street in the Asharah area of eastern rural Dayr al-Zawr.
- On 23 May, two children were killed and two other civilians injured as a result of the detonation of a piece of unexploded ordnance on a street in the Syrian Democratic Forces-held city of Kharayij, in the Mayadin region of eastern Dayr al-Zawr.
- On 31 May at around 0500, strikes hit a residential area in the town of Baghuz, in the rural Albu Kamal region of eastern rural Dayr al-Zawr, killing nine civilians, including two children, and injuring at least two other civilians, including a woman.

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Security Council

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Letter dated 19 June 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith a communication, dated 13 June 2018, which I received from the Director General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) (see annex). The letter transmits the note by the OPCW Technical Secretariat on the report of the OPCW fact-finding mission in the Syrian Arab Republic regarding alleged incidents in Ltamenah, Syrian Arab Republic, on 24 and 25 March 2017.

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

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Annex

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

I have the honour to transmit to you the note by the Technical Secretariat entitled "Report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria regarding alleged incidents in Ltamenah, Syrian Arab Republic, 24 and 25 March 2017" (see enclosure).

(*Signed*) Ahmet **Üzümcü**

Enclosure

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

REPORT OF THE OPCW FACT-FINDING MISSION IN SYRIA REGARDING ALLEGED INCIDENTS IN LTAMENAH, THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC 24 AND 25 MARCH 2017

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This report covers the work of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) in relation to two allegations in the area of Ltamenah, Hama Governorate on 24 and 25 March, respectively.

1.2 After the FFM became aware of allegations of use of a toxic chemical as a weapon in Ltamenah, in the Hama Governorate, the team assessed the credibility of the allegations based on information collected from open sources and information received from several non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

1.3 During the FFM deployment to gather facts related to the use of chemicals as a weapon in Khan Shaykhun on 4 April 2017, the team also received samples and conducted interviews related to the incident on 25 March 2017 and during these interviews, encountered allegations of use of a toxic chemical as a weapon in another part of Ltamenah on 24 March 2017.

1.4 For both incidents (24 and 25 March), the FFM interviewed a variety of witnesses including health workers, witnesses, first responders, and casualties. The team received environmental samples collected from the sites of the incidents.

1.5 The conclusions for both allegations were derived from the analysis of interviews, supporting material submitted during the interview process, analysis of environmental samples, and subsequent cross-reference and corroboration of the evidence.

24 March 2017

1.6 Whilst the collection of facts relating to the 25 and 30 March (S/1548/2017, dated 2 November 2017) incidents was ongoing, the team also identified witnesses in relation to the alleged incident on 24 March 2017, in Ltamenah. The interview process for the 24 March 2017 incident started at the end of July 2017.

1.7 Once the impact locations of the incident on 24 March 2017 were determined during the interviews, the FFM coordinated the sample collection from these locations with an NGO.

1.8 The FFM concluded that sarin was very likely used as a chemical weapon in the south of Ltamenah on 24 March 2017.

25 March 2017

1.9 The alleged incident of 25 March was widely reported in the media as targeting an area where an operating field hospital was located and in which one "barrel" cylinder fell inside the main entrance hall of the hospital and a doctor lost his life.

1.10 The FFM determined that chlorine was released from cylinders through mechanical impact. The FFM concluded that chlorine was very likely used as a chemical weapon at Ltamenah Hospital and the surrounding area on 25 March 2017.

2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 The FFM was set up in May 2014 "to establish facts surrounding allegations of the use of toxic chemicals, reportedly chlorine, for hostile purposes in the Syrian Arab Republic" on the basis of the Director-General's authority under the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter "the Convention") to seek to uphold at all times the object and purpose of the Convention, as reinforced by the relevant decisions of the OPCW Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council").

2.2 The terms of reference of the FFM were mutually agreed upon by the OPCW and the Syrian Arab Republic through the exchange of letters between the OPCW Director-General and the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, dated 1 and 10 May 2014, respectively (Annex to the Note by the Technical Secretariat S/1255/2015, dated 10 March 2015).

2.3 The continuation of the FFM was subsequently endorsed by the Council in decision EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015, as recalled by United Nations Security Council resolution 2209 (2015), and subsequently decision EC-M-50/DEC.1, dated 23 November 2015. Both of these Council decisions and resolution 2209 (2015) require the FFM to study all available information relating to allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, including that provided by the Syrian Arab Republic and by others.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 The FFM followed the same methodology developed in previous missions. This methodology has been comprehensively described in previous reports and therefore will not be repeated in detail here.

3.2 Whilst the overarching methodology has been consistently applied in establishing facts related to the use of chemicals as weapons in Syria, there is a unique set of circumstances presented by each allegation. These circumstances include access to physical evidence, electronic evidence, witnesses, and documentation, in addition to evaluating the time lag between the alleged incident and access. As such, the differing circumstances of each alleged incident assign lesser or greater relevance to the various components of the detailed methodology.

3.3 In particular, the evidentiary value of samples taken mostly close to the time of the alleged incident and supported by photographic and video evidence and in association with witness testimony was balanced against the evidentiary value of the FFM's visit to the site some time later to collect its own samples.

3.4 Accordingly, the FFM reviewed and compared the methodology in S/1318/2015.Rev.1 (dated 17 December 2015) and Add.1 (dated 29 February 2016), S/1319/2015 and S/1320/2015 (both dated 29 October 2015), S/1444/2016 (dated 21 December 2016), S/1491/2017 (dated 1 May 2017), S/1510/2017 (dated 29 June 2017), S/1548/2017 (dated 2 November 2017) and S/1626/18 (dated 15 May 2018) to ensure that, with respect to previous allegations, the application of the investigative approach was consistent.

3.5 To reach its conclusions, the FFM looked at the combination, consistency, and corroboration of evidence gathered in its entirety.

3.6 Reference documentation is listed in Annex 1.

4. DEPLOYMENT DETAILS AND CHRONOLOGY

Pre-deployment

4.1 After an incident was reported in the media concerning alleged use of chlorine that hit a field hospital in Ltamenah on 25 March 2017, the team conducted further open-source research and commenced the collection and review of all relevant information about the allegation. The majority of sources consisted, at an initial stage, of news media and the websites of various NGOs (Annex 2).

4.2 Subsequently, the FFM obtained further information from NGOs and expanded its search for potential interviewees and evidence regarding this allegation. Active monitoring of the media by the Information Cell and the FFM continued.

4.3 During this pre-deployment phase, the FFM was mobilised on 5 April 2017 (as detailed in S/1497/2017, S/1510/2017, and S/1548/2017) concerning the use of a chemical weapon in Khan Shaykhun on 4 April 2017. Whilst the team concentrated on this incident, additional information also became available about other allegations.

4.4 In light of the information revealed during the interviews on the potential use of a chemical as a weapon in Ltamenah on 24 March 2017, the FFM team further expanded its search for potential interviewees and possible evidence to include this alleged incident as well.

4.5 The FFM noted that during an investigation, complete, direct, and immediate access to the site of an alleged incident provides the greatest opportunity to collect information. As with all the allegations and incidents referenced in previous reports of the FFM (see paragraph 3.4 above), various constraints, mainly related to security, have not enabled immediate access to sites by the FFM.

4.6 Given that those constraints prevented a team deployment to the location of the alleged incident, the FFM determined that the principal methods for collecting and evaluating the credibility of information include the following: examination of existing reports; assessment and corroboration of background information; conduct of interviews with relevant medical care providers, alleged casualties, and other individuals linked to the reported incident; review of documentation and records provided by interviewees; analysis of the signs and symptoms of casualties as reported by interviewees; and receipt of environmental samples, for subsequent analysis.

4.7 The FFM team identified relevant witnesses through face-to-face interviews or teleconference calls, open-source research, medical records provided to the team, and through interaction with NGOs. Access to witnesses was coordinated with NGOs.

4.8 In addition to liaising with representatives of several NGOs, including but not limited to the Same Justice Chemical Violations Documentation Centre in Syria (CVDCS) and the Syrian Civil Defence (SCD), also known as White Helmets, the FFM also contacted witnesses and confirmed their willingness to provide testimony and potential evidence. Furthermore, the FFM coordinated with the NGOs to organise the movement of the witnesses.

Deployment activities

4.9 The FFM held its first interview on 10 April 2017, concerning an alleged incident in the area of Ltamenah on 25 March 2017. Throughout the interviews, including those relating to Ltamenah on 30 March 2017 and Khan Shaykhun on 4 April 2017, additional allegations were raised by the interviewees. These included allegations of an incident on 24 March (in Ltamenah, Khattab, and Qomhane) and on 3 April (in Hobait and Al-Tamanah); all in 2017.

4.10 Subsequently, the FFM began collecting information on the alleged incident on 24 March 2017. Based on the statements of the interviewees, the FFM identified witnesses and contacted NGOs for coordination.

4.11 During the first interview on 10 April 2017, the FFM received environmental samples relating to the alleged incident of 25 March 2017 from the interviewee. Further environmental samples were provided on 12 April 2017 and 19 February 2018 by an NGO.

4.12 Based on information supplied during interviews, the FFM identified munition parts that were of potential interest in relation to the alleged incident of 24 March 2017 and arranged for their collection by an NGO. As a result, further environmental samples and remnants of alleged munition parts were received by the FFM team on 19 February 2018.

4.13 From the moment of their receipt by the team, all samples were handled in accordance with applicable OPCW procedures, including the application of seals by the FFM team. The samples relating to the 24 March 2017 and 25 March 2017 incidents were analysed by two designated laboratories (DLs). The results are presented in Section 5 below.

5. INCIDENT SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

5.1 The following narratives are derived solely from interviews and, where possible, corroborated by different interviewees and evidence gathered by the team.

5.2 For reporting purposes, facilities that provide medical treatment are generically referred to as medical facilities. These include established major hospitals, smaller specialist hospitals, field hospitals, and basic medical centres that offer little more than first aid.

5.3 Owing to concerns raised by some of the witnesses, medical facilities—aside from those mentioned specifically herein—are not individually identified in this report. For ease of reporting, they have been assigned individual codes except for the specific medical facility that was directly related to the allegation (Ltamenah Hospital).

Ltamenah

5.4 Ltamenah is a village in the district of Mahardah within the Hama Governorate of the Syrian Arab Republic. It is located approximately 40 km northwest of Hama City, 70 km south of Idlib City and roughly 15 km to the south of Khan Shaykhun. Prior to the conflict (based on figures from the 2004 census), the population of the village and the surrounding area was approximately 16,000.

5.5 Software from http://en-ca.topographic-map.com/ was used in conjunction with Google Maps to produce the topography of Ltamenah and the surrounding area, as shown in Figure 1 below.

FIGURE 1: TOPOGRAPHY OF LTAMENAH AND SURROUNDING AREA

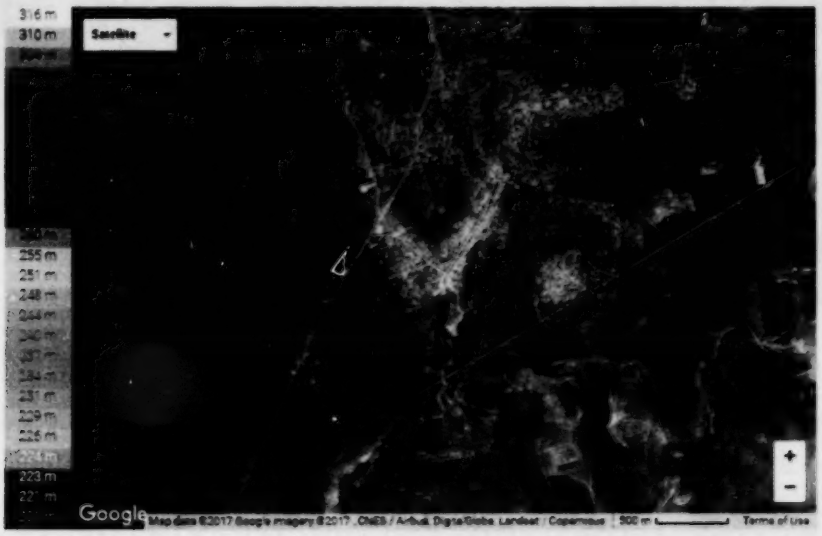
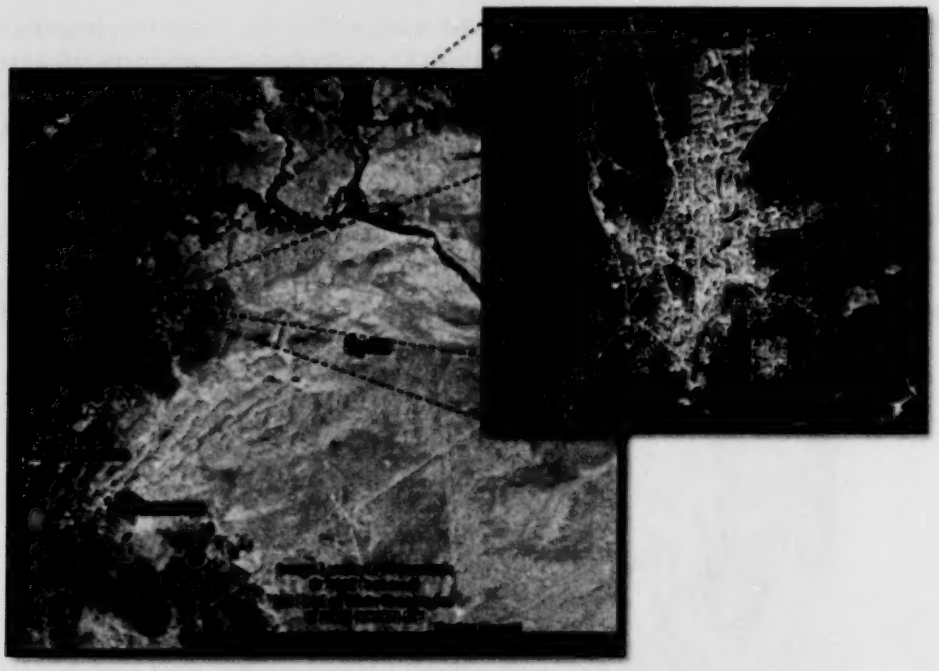


FIGURE 2: LTAMENAH AND ITS LOCATION WITHIN NORTHERN SYRIA



24 March 2017

5.7 The FFM retrieved online retrospective meteorological data on 24 March 2017 at the time of the incident. The weather information was retrieved from https://de.worldweatheronline.com.

TABLE 1: WEATHER INFORMATION FOR THE CITY OF LTAMENAH ON 24 MARCH 2017

Time	Temperature	Wind direction	Wind speed	Precipitation	Clouds	Humidity
06:00	10 °C	↖	1 m/s	0.0 mm	6%	50%

5.8 Between 28 July 2017 and 8 March 2018, inclusive, the FFM interviewed six people in person, including doctors and patients. All interviewees were male.

TABLE 2: INTERVIEWEE DETAILS

	Interviewee	Male	Female	Primary casualty	Secondary casualty
Treating physicians	1	1	0	0	0
Medical support staff	1	1	0	0	0
Witness	3	3	0	2	0
Sampler	1	1	0	0	0
Total	**6**	**6**	**0**	**2**	**0**

24 March 2017: Narrative

5.9 A witness reported being awoken on 24 March 2017 at approximately 05:45 by the sound of a plane launching at least two munitions in the southern outskirts of Ltamenah. The first munition made impact in the agricultural lands south of the city, producing a mild detonation and generating no smoke (first impact point). The second munition made impact 10 minutes later, about 100 meters south of the first impact point producing a strong detonation and smoke. Another separate witness indicated that the first munition contained a chemical that was not chlorine, and that the second one was of a more conventional nature (second impact point).

5.10 During the first few minutes following the initial detonation, people who were within a distance of 200 meters from the impact point started experiencing shortness of breath, abdominal pain, dizziness, headache, and tightness in the chest. Since several people had similar complaints, they left the area and self-reported to Ltamenah Hospital.

5.11 The Ltamenah Hospital medical personnel stated that casualties began arriving around 06:00. They presented with agitation, shortness of breath, and pinpoint pupils. After phone consultation with a physician experienced in treating chemical exposure, they were undressed, washed outside the hospital, and treated for exposure to an organophosphorus chemical. All cases were reported as mild by medical personnel.

5.12 Witnesses estimated up to 30 casualties, including women, men, and children. There were two groups of casualties: the first group consisted of two families who were sleeping in caves in the southern residential area of Ltamenah; the second group consisted of several men located in the agricultural land outside the city, close to the first impact point.

5.13 As described above, the impact location of the alleged chemical munition was approximately 200 meters east of the location of the second group affected in the agricultural lands, and southeast of the residential location of the first group. This residential area of Ltamenah was described as being a few hundred meters from the place of impact. The wind was reported to be blowing toward the northwest at the time of impact.

5.14 Casualties in the vicinity of the first impact point reported not smelling anything before the onset of symptoms. One witness who inspected the first crater described it as being about 1.5 meters in diameter by one meter in depth. Inside, there was a bubbling liquid and metal fragments.

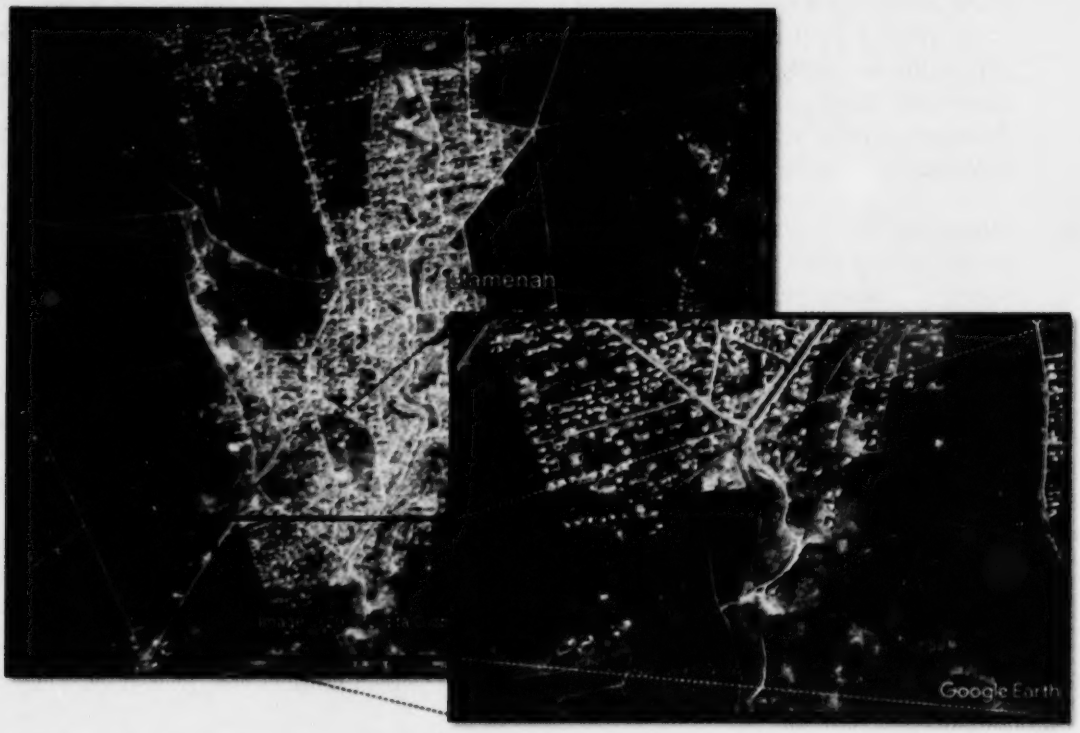
Another witness who saw the crater on the first day described the bubbling liquid as similar to water. Days later, the same crater was seen having a black bubbling liquid. According to both witnesses, a burning sensation on the skin was felt when approaching the crater and dead animals and burnt vegetation were found within 200 meters in the direction of the wind.

5.15 The crater at the second impact point was described as being of a significantly larger diameter and greater in depth. Metal fragments associated with conventional munitions were located inside.

24 March 2017: Location of alleged incident and casualties

5.16 The location of the alleged incident was in arable farmland where armed groups were stationed. A small number of agricultural workers were also present in the area at the time. The following figure shows the two impact points of munitions on 24 March 2017.

FIGURE 3: IMPACT LOCATIONS ON 24 MARCH 2017 IN SOUTH LTAMENAH



5.17 The following figure shows the location of casualties who went to Ltamenah Hospital for treatment.

FIGURE 4: LOCATION OF THE ALLEGED INCIDENT AND PRIMARY CASUALTIES

5.18 According to witnesses, all primary casualties were located both in caves close to the location of the alleged incident, and in a residential area in southern Ltamenah. One member of the medical treating staff who was interviewed also reported secondary contamination.

24 March 2017: Epidemiological analysis

Information gathered from medical personnel

5.19 The team interviewed one physician and one member of the medical support staff who worked at Ltamenah Hospital. The following is a summary of their testimony.

5.20 At approximately 06:00, casualties began arriving from a residential area in Ltamenah via civilian vehicles. The physician reported treating 16 civilians at the hospital. No hospital admission or treatment records were available at the time of the interviews and details such as age distribution and gender were not available.

5.21 Incoming patients were described as having a nonspecific irritating smell that was dissimilar to chlorine. All patients were decontaminated with water prior to entering to the emergency department.

5.22 All casualties are reported to have presented with shortness of breath, miosis, cough, oral hypersecretion, and perceived agitation. There were no reported skin, pulmonary, or vital sign abnormalities. All cases are described as being mild presentations and patients were discharged within 24 hours.

5.23 All patients received atropine with subsequent alleviation of miosis and secretions. Additionally, all patients received oxygen, bronchodilators, and corticosteroids. Two adult patients received diazepam and were transferred to another facility for continued treatment.

5.24 The medical staff had no information regarding the time of onset of physical complaints in relation to the incident.

Casualties

5.25 The team interviewed two casualties of the alleged attack. Both were asleep in a cave with five other persons and awoke when the alleged munition made impact.

5.26 Within one to five minutes after the witnesses left the cave, they described an onset of shortness of breath, headache, visual impairment, abdominal pain, dizziness, and tightness in the chest. They stated that the remaining occupants had similar physical complaints and time of onset.

5.27 Subjects alleged previous experience with chlorine exposure. They stated that this feeling was dissimilar and that there was no odour or colour that they typically associate with the alleged use of chlorine as a weapon.

5.28 Subjects self-reported to Ltamenah Hospital, where they described approximately 35 patients all with similar complaints. They stated they were treated with oxygen and an unknown medication to dilate their pupils.

5.29 Subjects had ongoing complaints of decreased visual acuity, photophobia, tightness in the chest, and shortness of breath for approximately 15 to 25 days after incident, for which they received outpatient treatment.

Onset in relation to the allegation

5.30 The following figures show patient information provided by treating medical staff, from presentation through to discharge.

FIGURE 5: PRESENTATION

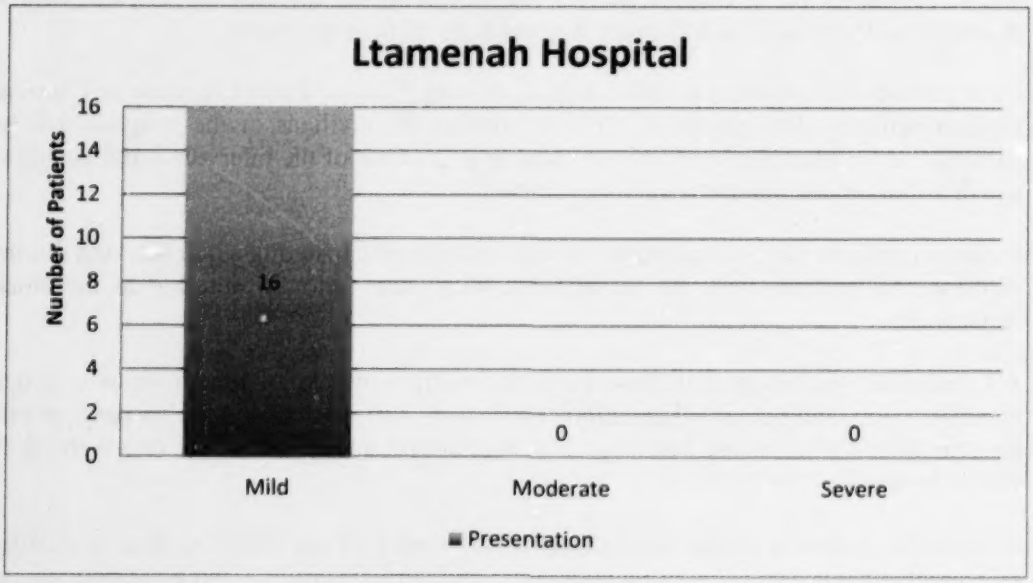


FIGURE 6: PATIENTS SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

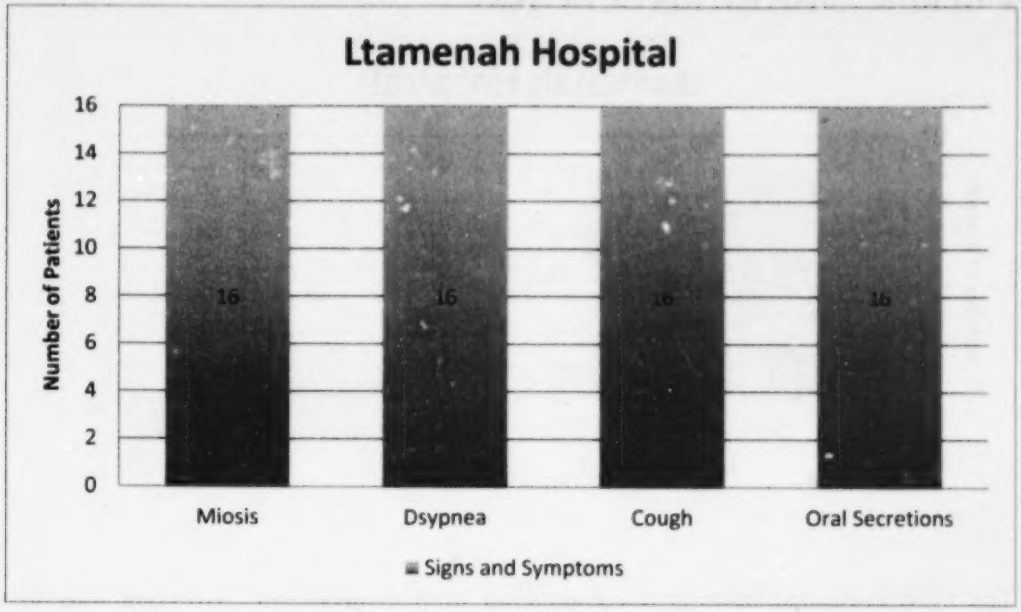


FIGURE 7: TREATMENT

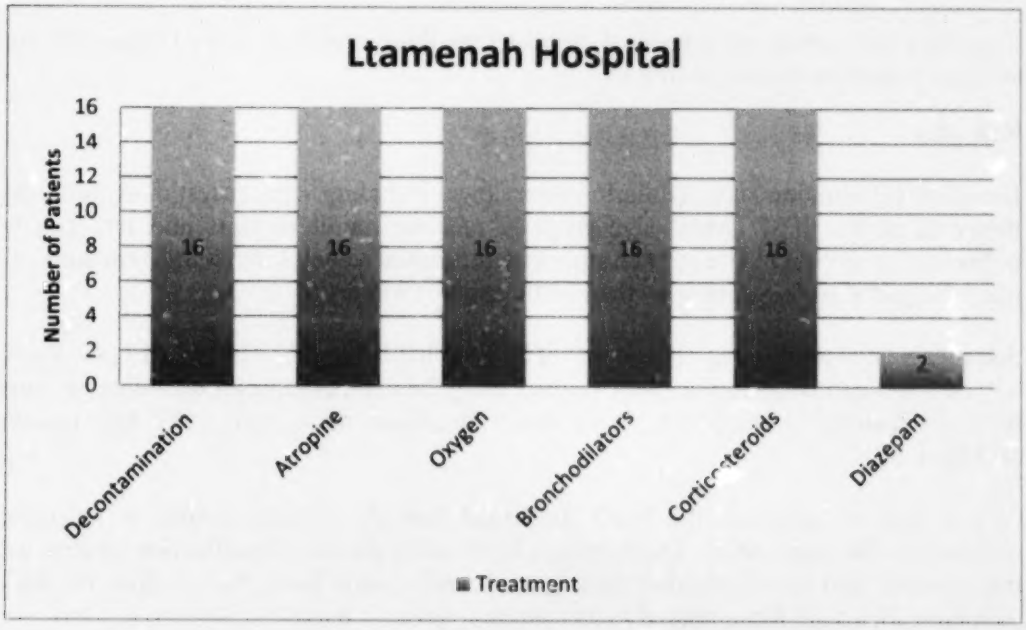
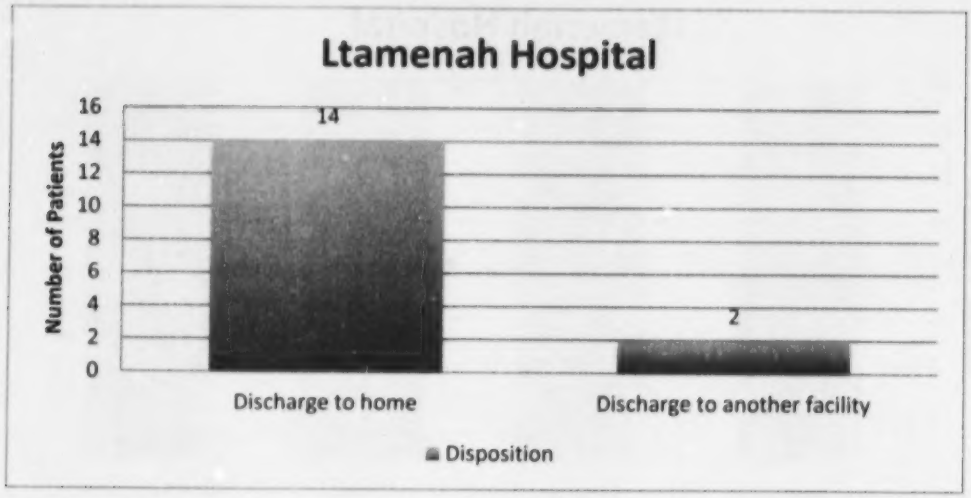


FIGURE 8: DISPOSITION OF PATIENT



5.31 The FFM requested hospital documentation from medical staff. However, due to damage sustained to the medical facility on 25 March 2017, it was not possible to provide these records and documentation. This would have allowed cross-checking and corroboration of information gathered from witness statements during interviews.

5.32 The signs and symptoms presented and their resulting response to medication are consistent with acetylcholinesterase inhibition.

Samples

5.33 Based on information supplied during interviews, including witness testimony and supporting media files, the FFM identified potentially relevant munition parts and arranged for their collection by an NGO. As a result further environmental samples, including remnants of alleged munition parts, were received by the FFM team on 19 February 2018.

5.34 Samples related to the alleged incidents of 24 March 2017 and 25 March 2017 (see below) were not analysed immediately due to the priority assigned to other samples including but not limited to those relating to the incidents in Khan Shaykhun on 4 April 2017 and Ltamenah on 30 March 2017.

5.35 At the time of handover, the NGO confirmed that all of these samples were collected by members of the same NGO. The members involved in the sample collection process were also interviewed, and they provided photographs and videos from the location of the alleged incidents, including those related to the sampling process itself.

5.36 The following table summarises the results of analyses performed by two DLs. Given the nature of some of the samples, it was not possible to split them and send them to two separate DLs. In this case, the table indicates 'Not analysed', indicating that the sample was not given to the specified DL—not that the DL chose not analyse the sample.

TABLE 3: LIST OF SAMPLES AND ANALYTICAL RESULTS FROM DESIGNATED LABORATORIES

List of Samples				Analysis Results	
N	Evidence No.	Sample Code	Description	Designated Laboratory 2	Designated Laboratory 3
1.	20180219172318	FFM/47/18/SLS18	Soil from the crater	Sarin, EIMP, DIMP, IMPA, IPMPA, Hexamine, Pyro, TPP, TEA, HFP	Sarin, DIMP, IMPA, MPA, Pyro, DIPP, TPP, DIPF, Hexamine
2.	20180219172319	FFM/47/18/SLS19	Soil from the crater	Sarin, EIMP, DIMP, IMPA, IPMPA, Hexamine, TPP, TEA, DIPF, HFP	DIMP, IMPA, MPA, DIPP, TPP, DIPF, HFP, Hexamine
3.	20180219172325	FFM/47/18/SDS25	Metal piece of munition from the crater	DIMP, IMPA	MPA
4.	20180219172328	FFM/47/18/SDS28	Metal piece of munition from the crater	DIMP, IMPA, MPA, TPP, TEA, Hexamine, HFP	Not analysed
5.	20180219172329	FFM/47/18/SDS29	Metal piece of munition from the crater	DIMP, IMPA, MPA, TPP, DIPF, Hexamine, MPFA, Pyro, TEA, HFP	Not analysed
6.	20180219172320	FFM/47/18/SLS20	Soil at 50 m	DIMP	Not analysed
7.	20180219172321	FFM/47/18/SLS21	Soil at 100m under a metal piece	DIMP, TEA	n.d.
8.	20180219172326	FFM/47/18/SDS26	Metal pieces of munition at 100m from the crater	IMPA	Not analysed
9.	20180219172323	FFM/47/18/SLS23	Soil at 150 m	n.d.	n.d.

	List of Samples			Analysis Results	
10.	20180219172322	FFM/47/18/SDS22	Soil at 150 m under a meal piece	n.d.	n.d.
11.	**20180219172327**	**FFM/47/18/SDS27**	**Metal piece of munition at 150m from the crater (11)**	**IMPA**	**Not analysed**
12.	20180219172324	FFM/47/18/SDS24	Metal piece (2)	DIMP IMPA	Not analysed

Key	
DIMP	Di-isopropyl methylphosphonate (by-product of sarin production)
DIPP	Diisopropyl phosphate
DIPF	Di-isopropyl phosphorofluoridate (by-product of sarin precursor/sarin production)
EIMP	Ethyl isopropyl methylphosphonate
Hexamine	Hexamethylentetramine
HFP	Hexafluorophosphate
IMPA	Isopropyl methylphosphonate (first degradation product of sarin)
IPMPA	Isopropyl propyl methylphosphonate
MPA	Methylphosphonic acid (degradation product of sarin and/or nerve agent precursor and/or nerve agent by-product)
MPFA	Methylphosphonofluoridic acid
n.d.	No detection of relevant chemicals (as defined by the OPCW laboratory)
Pyro	Di-isopropyl dimethylpyrophosphonate (by-product of sarin production)
TEA	Triethanolamine
TPP	Tri-isopropyl phosphate (by-product of sarin precursor/sarin production)

5.37 The FFM noted similarities between the analytes in these samples and those from previous allegations. The following table compares similar samples collected taken as part of the investigation into the use of sarin as a chemical weapon on 4 April 2017 in Khan Shaykhun, and the more than likely use of sarin as a chemical weapon on 30 March 2017, also in Ltamenah.

TABLE 4: LIST OF SAMPLES AND ANALYTICAL RESULTS FROM DESIGNATED LABORATORIES

Sample		Latamenah 24 March 2017	Latamenah 30 March 2017	Khan Shaykhun 4 April 2017
Location	**Type**	**Chemicals Reported**	**Chemicals Reported**	**Chemicals Reported**
From the crater	Soil	Sarin, DIMP, Hexamine, Pyro, IMPA, DIPP, DIPF, HFP, EIMP, IPMPA, TPP, MPA, TEA.	Sarin, DIMP, Hexamine, IMPA, iPPF, DIPP, DIPF, HFP, TPP, MPA, DBP.	Sarin, DIMP, Hexamine, Pyro, IMPA, DIPP, DIPF, HFP, TPP, MPA.
	Gravel	**N.A**	**Sarin, DIMP, IMPA, MPA.**	**Sarin, DIMP, Hexamine, IMPA, DIPP, DIPF, HFP, MPA.**
	Metal piece	DIMP, Hexamine, Pyro, IMPA, DIPF, HFP, MPFA, TPP, MPA, TEA.	Sarin, DIMP, Hexamine, Pyro, IMPA, iPPF DIPP, DIPF, HFP, MPFA, TPP, MPA, DBP, 5-ethyl-1,3-dioxane-5-methanol.	Sarin, DIMP, Hexamine, Pyro, IMPA, DIPF, EIMP, TPP.
At 50 m from the crater	**Soil**	**DIMP**	**Sarin, IMPA, MPA, DIMP.**	**Sarin, DIMP, IMPA, DIPP, DIPF, TPP, MPA.**
At 100 m from the crater	Soil	DIMP, TEA.	N.A	DIMP, IMPA.

Key	
DIMP	Di-isopropyl methylphosphonate (by-product of sarin production)
DIPF	Di-isopropyl phosphorofluoridate (by-product of sarin precursor/sarin production)
DIPP	Diisopropyl phosphate
EIMP	Ethyl isopropyl methylphosphonate
Hexamine	Hexamethylentetramine
HFP	Hexafluorophosphate
IMPA	Isopropyl methylphosphonate (first degradation product of sarin)
IPMPA	Isopropyl propyl methylphosphonate
MPA	Methylphosphonic acid (degradation product of sarin and/or nerve agent precursor and/or nerve agent by-product)
MPFA	Methylphosphonofluoridic acid
n.d.	No detection of relevant chemicals (as defined by the OPCW laboratory)

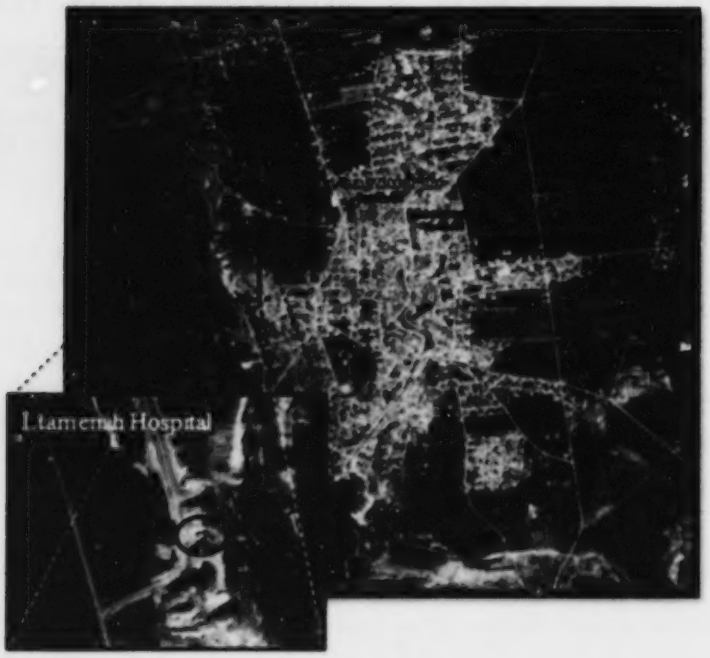
Key	
Pyro	Di-isopropyl dimethylpyrophosphonate (by-product of sarin production)
TEA	Triethanolamine
TPP	Tri-isopropyl phosphate (by-product of sarin precursor/sarin production)

25 March 2017

5.38 Ltamenah Hospital is located in the northwestern outskirts of the city of Ltamenah and is built inside a cave carved within a rock formation. This is the same hospital also referred to as Ltamenah Hospital in the allegation above on 24 March 2017.

5.39 The following figures show the relative location of the city and the hospital where the alleged incident took place.

FIGURE 9: LOCATION OF LTAMENAH HOSPITAL



5.40 Witnesses described the weather on that day as moderate temperature (20 - 25°C), no wind or low wind speed blowing in an easterly direction, a clear sky, and good visibility. The FFM retrieved online retrospective meteorological data specific for 25 March 2017 in the area at the time of the incident. The weather information was retrieved from https://darksky.net.

TABLE 5: WEATHER INFORMATION FOR THE CITY OF LTAMENAH ON 25 MARCH 2017

Time	Temperature	Wind direction	Wind speed	Precipitation	Clouds	Humidity
15:00	24°C	→	4 m/s	0.0 mm	3%	24%

5.41 Between 10 April 2017 and 8 March 2018 inclusive, the FFM interviewed 13 people in person, including medical staff, patients, and first responders—two of whom were involved in the environmental sample collection process. All interviewees were male.

TABLE 6: INTERVIEWEE DETAILS

	Interviewee	Male	Female	Primary casualty	Secondary casualty
Treating physicians	2	2	0	0	0
Medical support staff	1	1	0	0	0
Witness	7	7	0	1	0
Sampler	3	3	0	0	0
Total	**13**	**13**	**0**	**1**	**0**

25 March 2017: Narrative

5.42 At approximately 15:00 hours on 25 March 2017, a witness reported two raids carried out by helicopters in the northwestern outskirts of the city of Ltamenah. During the first raid, two barrels were dropped. Two additional barrels were dropped during the second raid, 15 minutes later. A different witness stated seeing a helicopter dropping the first two barrels. The sounds following the impacts were described as weaker detonations compared to explosive barrels.

5.43 Although witnesses refer to the items as barrels, their shape, based on description, photographs, and viewing by the FFM, is cylindrical. Thus to differentiate these barrels, alleged to be chemical, from those that are more explosive in nature, they will be referred to as cylinders in subsequent text.

5.44 One of the cylinders impacted the sand and concrete roof at the entrance to the hospital, leading directly to the Emergency Room (ER) at Ltamenah Hospital. This cylinder did not explode but pierced the concrete roof, and then fell inside the ER. Due to the impact, the head of the cylinder cracked releasing a gas inside the hospital. The gas was described by witnesses as yellow, with a pungent and irritating smell, and since the hospital was carved inside a rock formation, the gas was rapidly dispersed in the rooms of the cave.

5.45 The signs and symptoms reported by the casualties shortly after the dispersion of the gas include shortness of breath, moderate to severe cough, mucosal membrane irritation, blurred vision, lacrimation, expectoration, and vomiting. People located close to the entrance escaped immediately through the emergency exit.

5.46 At the time of the incident, Dr. Ali Darwish, Orthopaedic Surgeon, was conducting a surgical procedure with the assistance of a nurse in the Operation Room (OR), located deep inside the cave hospital. The patient was anesthetised and intubated to protect the respiratory airway.

5.47 Several sources indicated that Dr. Ali Darwish and the assistant remained inside the OR for a longer period of time. This led to significantly higher exposure to the gas compared to other hospital staff, who escaped immediately. This higher exposure is also related to the need to escape through the gas. According to accounts, the surgical patient was only mildly affected due to the previously mentioned airway protection. However, Dr. Darwish and his assistant were severely affected.

5.48 Approximately ten minutes after the incident, the initial casualties were transported to Medical Facility A (MF-A) by civilians in private vehicles. MF-A is located relatively near the site of the incident. Dr. Ali Darwish, the assistant, and the patient were rescued by the SCD and were also transported to MF-A.

5.49 According to medical records provided to the FFM by interviewees, the number of casualties was 33, including 15 Ltamenah Hospital staff. Most of them reported experiencing shortness of breath, cough, and lacrimation. Patients requiring intubation were transferred to Medical Facility B (MF-B).

5.50 Critical patients such as Dr. Ali Darwish and the assistant were immediately transferred to other hospitals. Dr. Ali Darwish died on the way to Medical Facility C (MF-C). The assistant was transferred to a hospital in a neighbouring country.

25 March 2017: Epidemiological analysis

5.51 The team interviewed two physicians, one member of medical support staff, and one casualty. One physician works at Ltamenah Hospital and one at MF-A. The following is a summary of their testimony.

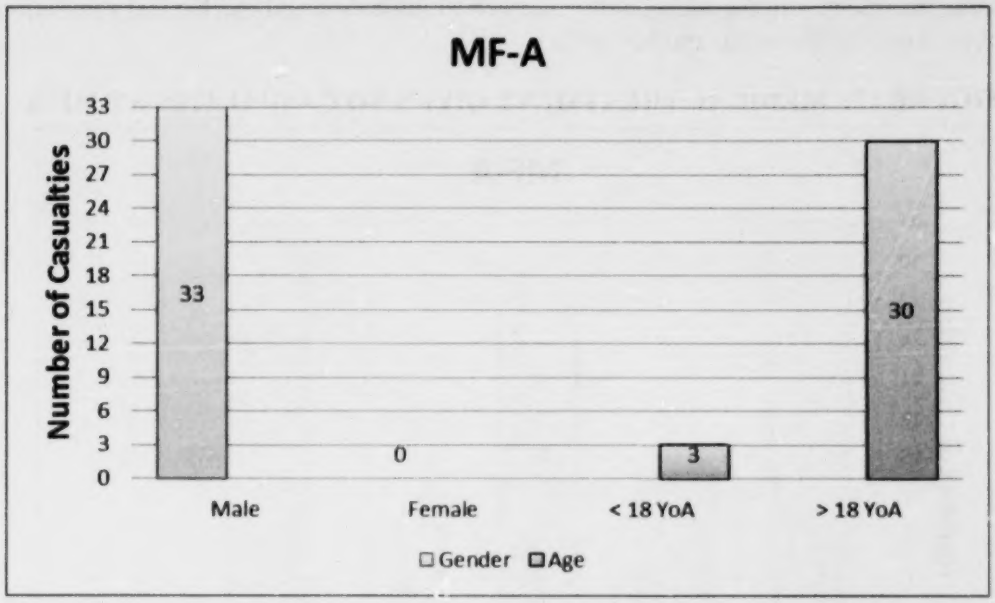
5.52 At approximately 15:00 hours, a cylinder allegedly containing chlorine struck the entrance of Ltamenah Hospital, releasing a yellow gas that smelled of detergent or household chlorine products.[1] All patients and staff—aside from the three mentioned previously—were able to immediately exit the premises.

5.53 Casualties did not receive treatment onsite but were moved to MF-A within approximately 15 minutes by ambulance and private vehicles. Upon arrival at MF-A, they were undressed and decontaminated with water. It was noted that their clothing smelled like household chlorine products.

5.54 The number of causalities reported in medical records was 33. Age, gender, complaint, treatment, and disposition were obtained from the physicians and hospital records of MF-A.

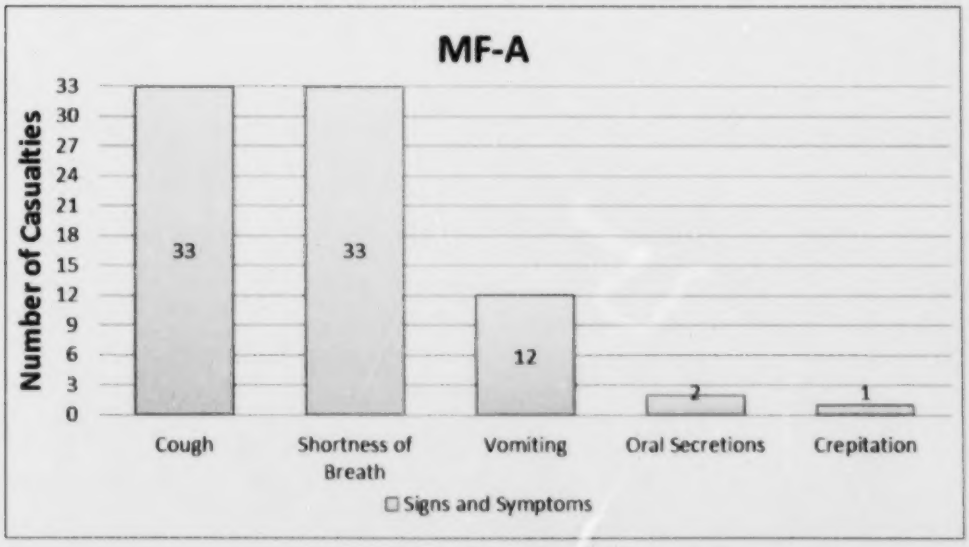
[1] The witnesses referred to a commercial household detergent called "Clor".

FIGURE 10: AGE AND GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF CASUALTIES ON PRESENTATION AT MF-A



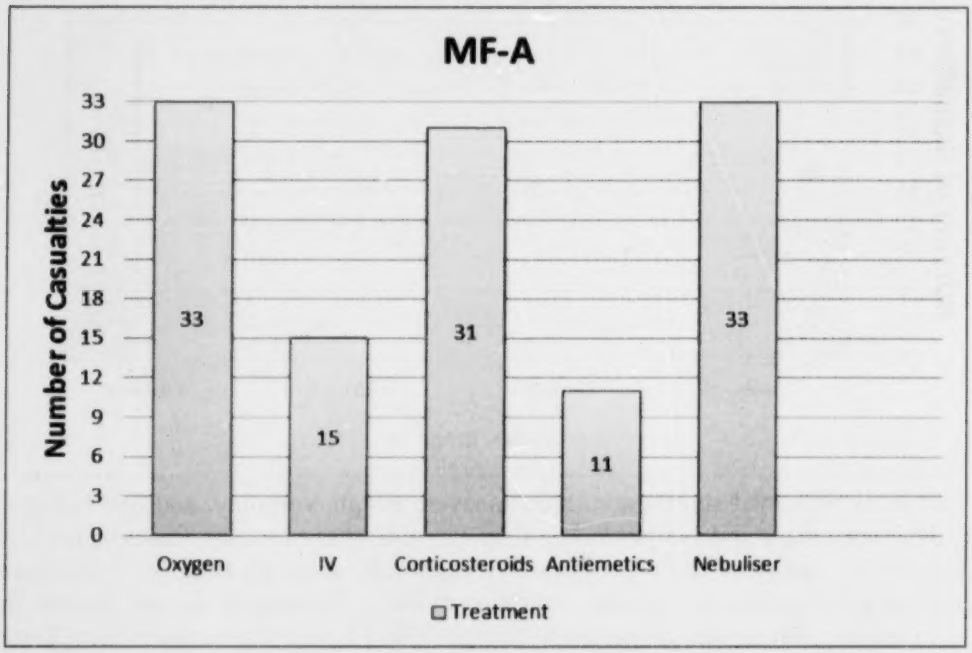
5.55 All casualties presented shortness of breath, severe cough, vomiting, and oral hypersecretion. They developed signs and symptoms less than a minute after exposure. Cases were classified as predominantly moderate with peripheral oxygen saturation of 80-85%. Nine cases were determined to be severe with oxygen saturation of 60%. Three cases did not survive, including Dr. Ali Darwish. There were no pupillary changes noted in any of the cases. Chest X-rays taken at MF-A and MF-C revealed opacity in the lungs typical of mucosal membrane damage, and consistent with inhalation of a pulmonary irritant.

FIGURE 11: SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CASUALTIES ON PRESENTATION AT MF-A



5.56 Patients were treated with oxygen, intravenous (IV) fluids, bronchodilators, corticosteroids, anti-emetics, antibiotics, and in one case with atropine for secretions. Severe cases received the same treatment with the addition of endotracheal intubation and mechanical ventilation. These cases were transferred to another facility.

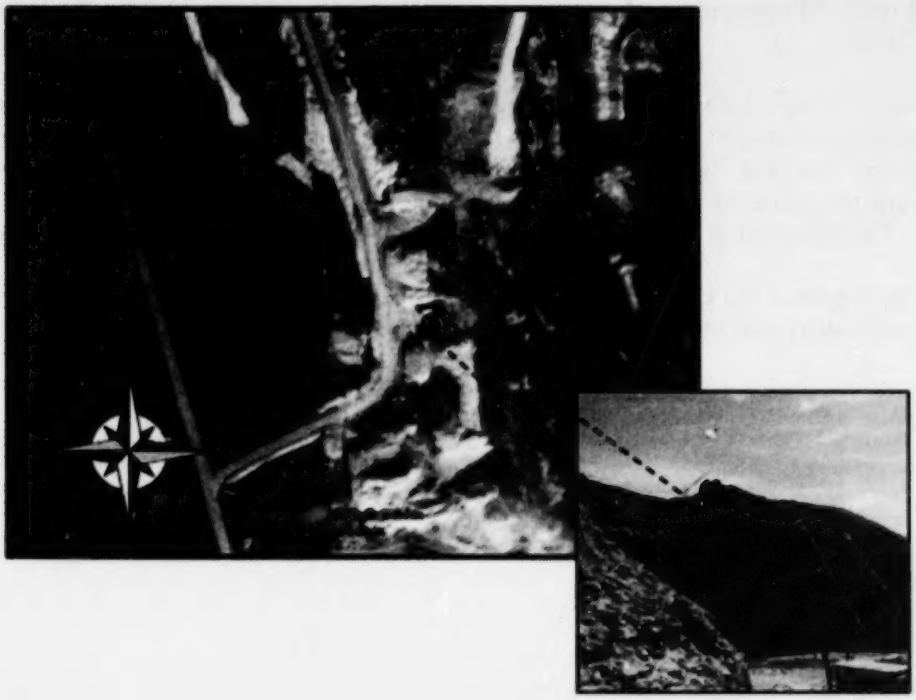
FIGURE 12: MEDICAL TREATMENT GIVEN TO CASUALTIES AT MF-A



25 March 2017: Location of alleged incident and casualties

5.57 The location of the alleged incident was adjacent to a combat zone and co-located with farming area. A small number of agricultural workers were present in the area at the time.

FIGURE 13: LOCATIONS OF IMPACT POINTS

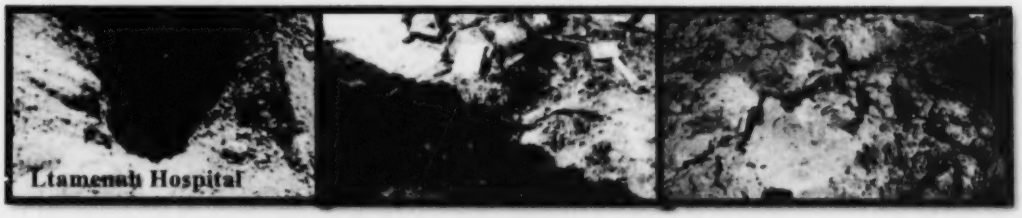


5.58 According to witness statements, all primary casualties were located inside the hospital. Interviewed medical personnel reported no secondary exposure.

5.59 The impact location of the hospital as indicated by witnesses are shown in Figure 13. The first cylinder (1) pierced the rooftop of the ER at the entrance of Ltamenah Hospital. The second cylinder, third cylinder, and fourth cylinder fell to the ground at the respective distances of approximately 50 meters northwest to the hospital, 200 meters east to the hospital, and 100 meters to 150 meters south to the hospital. Witnesses reported that vegetation appeared burnt for about 100 metres from the impact points.

5.60 Based on the analysis of the digital evidence gathered by the FFM from different sources, including witnesses, the FFM could account for three cylinders and three craters/impact points. Three of the craters/impact points are shown in Figure 14 below.

FIGURE 14: IMPACT POINTS



25 March 2017 – Environmental samples

5.61 The FFM received environmental samples and metal objects on 10 and 12 April 2017 and 19 February 2018.

5.62 At the time of handover, the team was informed that all samples were taken by the parties who maintained their custody. A member of the SCD who took the samples was present at the handover and provided information on every sample. This information was supported by interviewing the same SCD member and by photographs and videos handed over during interview. The information was corroborated by interviewing two additional SCD members

5.63 Samples were split at the OPCW Laboratory before being transported to DLs. The following table gives the analytical results from each sample

SAMPLES AND ORGANIC ANALYSIS RESULTS FROM DESIGNATED LABORATORIES

Sample					Analysis Result	
Ref	Sample From	Evidence Reference Number	Sample Code	Description	Designated Laboratory 2	Designated Laboratory 3
1.	Impact point(S)	20170410130109	06SDS	Metal fragments from the barrel remnants	n.d	2,4,6-Trinitrotoluene (TNT)
2.		20170410130110	07SLS	Soil samples from Latamneh hospital	Trichloroacetic acid	n.d
3.		20170410130111	08SLS	Soil Sample	Trichloroacetic acid	2,4,6-Trinitrotoluene (TNT)
4.		20170410130112	09SLS	Soil Sample	Trichloroacetic acid 2,2,2-Trichloroethanol	Diisopropyl methylphosphonate (DIMP)
5.		20170412135103	28AQS	Water next to 1st barrel	Trichloroacetic acid	Diisopropyl methylphosphonate (DIMP)
6.		20170412135104	29AQS	Water next to 2nd barrel	Diisopropyl methylphosphonate (DIMP)	Diisopropyl methylphosphonate (DIMP)
7.		20170412135105	30WPS	Wipe from outer barrel	n.d	n.d
8.		20170412135115	40SLS	Soil next to the 1st barrel	Trichloroacetic acid Tris(2-chloroethyl)phosphate Diisopropyl methylphosphonate 2,2,2-Trichloroethanol	Diisopropyl methylphosphonate (DIMP)
9.		20170412135116	41SLS	Mud next to the 2nd barrel	Trichloroacetic acid Pentachlorophenol 2,3,4,6-Tetrachlorophenol 2,4,6-Trichlorophenol Tris(2-chloroethyl)phosphate Diisopropyl methylphosphonate (DIMP) Chloral hydrate	Diisopropyl methylphosphonate (DIMP) 2,4,6-Trinitrotoluene (TNT)

Sample					Analysis Result	
Ref	Sample From	Evidence Reference Number	Sample Code	Description	Designated Laboratory 2	Designated Laboratory 3
10.	Inside the Hospital	20170412135101	01SDS	Dr. Ali Darwish Scrubs: Trousers	1,4-Dichlorobenzene	Diisopropyl methylphosphonate (DIMP)
11.		20170412135102	02SDS	Dr. Ali Darwish Scrubs: Shirt	1,4-Dichlorobenzene Triethanolamine	Diisopropyl methylphosphonate (DIMP)
12.		20170412135103	03SDS	Samples of casualties clothing: Hospital scrubs	1,4-Dichlorobenzene 2-Chlorophenol 2,5-Dichlorophenol 2,4,6-Trichlorophenol Benzyl chloride	Diisopropyl methylphosphonate (DIMP)
13.		20170412135111	36SDS	Blanket	Trichloroacetic acid Pentachlorophenol 2,3,4,6-Tetrachlorophenol 2,4,6-Trichlorophenol	Diisopropyl methylphosphonate (DIMP)
14.		20170412135112	37SDS	Scissors from the operation room	2,4,6-Trichlorophenol	Diisopropyl methylphosphonate (DIMP)
15.		20170412135113	38SDS	Surgical tools from the operation room	Diisopropyl methylphosphonate	Diisopropyl methylphosphonate (DIMP)
16.		20170412135114	39SDS	Clothes from the operation room	2,2,2-Trichloroethanol	N.A
17.		20180219172317	SDS17	Wooden piece from the bottom rail of the Operation Room door in Latamneh hospital	Chloroiodomethane Chloroisocyanatobenzene Dichloroacetic acid	Bornyl chloride
18.	Outside the Hospital	20170412135101	26SDS	Paper sample, 50 m away from impact point	Diisopropyl methylphosphonate (DIMP) Methyl 9,10-dichlorooctadecanoate	Diisopropyl methylphosphonate (DIMP)

Ref	Sample From	Sample: Evidence Reference Number	Sample: Sample Code	Sample: Description	Analysis Result: Designated Laboratory 2	Analysis Result: Designated Laboratory 3
						Isopropyl methylphosphonate (IPMPA)
19.		20170412135102	27SDS	Concrete, 50 m away	Trichloroacetic acid Diisopropyl methylphosphonate (DIMP) 1,3,5-Trinitrobenzene 2,4-Dinitrotoluene 2,4,6-Trinitrotoluene (TNT) 2-Amino-4,6-dinitrotoluene 4-Amino-2,6-dinitrotoluene Picric acid	Diisopropyl methylphosphonate (DIMP) Isopropyl methylphosphonate (IPMPA) 2,4,6-Trinitrotoluene (TNT)
20.		20170412135117	42SLS	Soil 50m away from 2nd barrel	Diisopropyl methylphosphonate (DIMP)	Diisopropyl methylphosphonate (DIMP)
21.		20170412135118	43SLS	Soil 150m	2,2,2-Trichloroethanol 2,4,6-Trinitrotoluene (TNT) 2-Amino-4,6-dinitrotoluene 4-Amino-2,6-dinitrotoluene	Diisopropyl methylphosphonate (DIMP)
22.	Casualties and first responder	20170410130107	04SDS	Samples of casualties clothing: Shirt	n.d	Diisopropyl methylphosphonate (DIMP)
23.		20170410130108	05SDS	Samples of casualties clothing: Shirt	Triethanolamine	Diisopropyl methylphosphonate (DIMP)
24.		20170412135119	44SDS	Civil Defence Uniform: Pants	2,4,6-Trichlorophenol	Diisopropyl methylphosphonate (DIMP)
25.		20170412135120	45SDS	Civil Defence Uniform: Jacket	Methylphosphonic acid Benzyl chloride	Diisopropyl methylphosphonate (DIMP)

SAMPLES AND INORGANIC ANALYSIS RESULTS FROM A DESIGNATED LABORATORY

Sample				Analysis Results Concentration in ppm												
Ref	Sample Description	OPCW Code	Work code	Cl^-	F^-	NO_2^-	Br^-	NO_3^-	PO_4^{3-}	SO_4^{2-}	Li^+	Na^+	NH_4^+	K^+	Ca^{2+}	Mg^{2+}
1.	Metal Fragment	06SDS	M06-E2	366	<0.2	<0.4	<1.6	<1.4	<1.8	24	<0.2	18	<6	16	193	<0.4
2.	Soil	07SLS	S07-E2	2135	<0.2	<0.4	19	42	<1.8	34	<0.2	21	12	18	1127	37
3.	Soil	08SLS	S08-E2	1898	<0.2	<0.4	31	37	<1.8	36	<0.2	43	<6	39	957	41
4.	Sol	09SLS	S09-E2	2469	<0.2	<0.4	41	43	<1.8	36	<0.2	29	12	25	1274	54
5.	Water	28AQS	W28-E0	1113	<0.2	<0.4	156	50	<1.8	44	<0.2	46	<1.2	86	620	20
6.	Water	29AQS	W29-E0	1484	<0.2	<0.4	108	51	<1.8	39	<0.2	32	<1.2	14	583	30
7.	Wipe from barrel	30WPS	E30-E0	22	<0.2	<0.4	<1.6	<1.4	<1.8	23	<0.3	13	<1.2	2.2	<2.8	<0.4
8.	Soil	40SLS	S40-E2	1709	<0.2	<0.4	93	35	<1.8	32	<0.2	28	5	12	908	45
9.	Mud (Soil)	41SLS	S41-E2	8174	<0.2	<0.4	383	73	<1.8	85	<0.2	120	20	21	4406	127
10.	Clothing	01SDS	T01-E2	992	247	<2	<8	<7	<9	1316	<1	1308	<6	11	<14	64
11.	Clothing	02SDS	T02-E2	1416	108	<2	<8	<7	<9	<9	<1	941	<6	11	<14	64
12.	Clothing	03SDS	T03-E2	627	1	<2	<8	<7	<9	<9	<1	204	<6	11	<14	64
13.	Blanket	36SDS	T36-E2	7496	1	<2	<8	<7	<9	<9	<1	402	<6	11	4140	<2
14.	Part of Scissors	37SDS	E37-E0	27	<0.2	<0.4	<1.6	<1.4	<1.8	22	<0.2	8	<3	2.2	<2.8	<0.4
15.	Metal object	38SDS	E38-E0	423	<0.2	<0.4	<1.6	<1.4	<1.8	<1.8	<0.2	15	12	39	11	<0.4
16.	Clothing	39SDS	N.A	N.A	N.A	N.A	N.A	N.A	N.A	N.A	N.A	N.A	N.A	N.A	N.A	N.A
17.	Wood from Door	SDS17	V17-E2	340	18	21	<8	140	<8.9	140	<1.4	340	29	79	150	9
18.	Paper	26SDS	M26-E2	1821	11	92	26	273	<9	524	<1	1327	<6	11	263	<2
19.	Concrete	27SDS	S27-E2	10526	<0.2	<0.4	720	89	<1.8	251	<0.2	242	<1	581	<2.8	6

Sample				Analysis Results Concentration in ppm												
Ref	Sample Description	OPCW Code	Work code	Cl^-	F^-	NO_2^-	Br^-	NO_3^-	PO_4^{3-}	SO_4^{2-}	Li^+	Na^+	NH_4^+	K^+	Ca^{2+}	Mg^{2+}
20.	Soil	42SLS	S42-E2	87	<0.2	<0.4	<1.6	36	<1.8	72	<0.2	36	<1.2	3	62	5
21.	Soil	43SLS	S43-E2	25	<0.2	<0.4	<1.6	56	<1.8	33	<0.2	11	<1.2	2.2	39	1
22.	Clothing	04SDS	T04-E2	1112	<1	<2	<8	<7	<9	1735	<1	1263	<6	11	<14	159
23.	Clothing	05SDS	T05-E2	90	135	<2	<8	<7	<9	<9	<1	500	<6	11	<14	<2
24.	Clothing (Sub-Sample) B	44SDS	T44BE2	1866	<1	92	<8	293	382	1549	2	1485	115	389	<14	<2
	Clothing (Sub-Sample) M		T44M-E2	2464	2479	921	<8	2660	<9	2320	22	456	79	110	2633	20
	Clothing (Sub-Sample) S		T44S-E2	2906	1158	92	126	290	366	1510	<1	1459	122	384	1104	<2
25.	Clothing	45SDS	T45-E2	1252	181	<2	<8	<7	<9	916	<1	1069	<6	11	<14	96
B01	System Blank	N.A	SBK-E2	12	<0.2	<0.4	<1.6	<1.4	<1.8	<1.8	<0.2	4	<1.2	2.2	<2.8	<0.4
B02	System Blank (H_2O)	N.A	WBK-E0	<0.2	<0.2	<0.4	<1.6	<1.4	<1.8	<1.8	<0.2	<1	<1.2	2.2	<2.8	<0.4
B03	System Blank (H_2O/Acetone 1:1)	N.A	EBK-E0	0.2	<0.2	<0.4	<1.6	<1.4	<1.8	<1.8	<0.2	<1	<1.2	2.2	<2.8	<0.4
B04	System Blank (D_2O)	N.A	TBK-E2	67	<1	<2	<8	<7	<9	<9	<1	<1	<6	11	<14	<2

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 As with other allegations investigated by the FFM, the team was not able to visit secured sites immediately after the alleged incidents. The potential for access was made more difficult as the areas were predominantly military areas with ongoing conflict prior to the alleged incident through to the time this report was being drafted. The team therefore relied on: the testimony of interviewees, samples as made available by the interviewees, and limited hospital records.

6.2 Through interviews and review of video evidence supplied at interview, the FFM was able to determine that environmental samples, including metal parts, were retrieved from the sites of the respective allegations.

6.3 With regard to the alleged incident of 24 March 2017 in Ltamenah, the FFM had limited access to associated medical records and was unable to visit hospitals that may have admitted patients. The limited number of interviewees gave a consistent narrative of the incident, reported medical signs and symptoms, and the way in which samples were collected. The FFM was able to place witnesses at the site at the time and corroborate their medical assessment. Based on these factors, the FFM determined that 16 people displayed signs and symptoms—and resulting response to medication—consistent with acetylcholinesterase inhibition.

6.4 With respect to the same alleged incident, sample analysis results showed the presence of sarin and other chemicals, including potential impurities and breakdown products related to sarin. The FFM further noted that the results were consistent with those from the incident in Khan Shaykhun on 4 April 2017 where sarin was used, and the incident in Ltamenah on 30 March 2017, where sarin was likely used as a chemical weapon.

6.5 With regard to the alleged incident of 25 March 2017 in northwestern Ltamenah, while the FFM was unable to visit hospitals that may have admitted patients, the team were able to review hospital records and interview medical staff who provided treatment. Interviewees gave a consistent narrative of the incident, reported medical signs and symptoms, and the way in which samples were collected. The FFM was able to place witnesses at the site at the time and corroborate their medical assessment. Based on these factors, the FFM determined that 33 people displayed medical signs and symptoms associated with exposure to a chemical that primarily irritates tissue in the eyes, nose, throat, and lungs.

6.6 Also, with respect to the same alleged incident, analysis results from samples showed the presence of elevated levels of chloride. The FFM further notes the presence of chemicals that may be related to sarin. In the absence of information to the contrary, the FFM does not attribute the presence of these chemicals to this alleged incident, but instead determines their presence as being related to the very likely use of sarin the day before, and the decontamination of patients at this location.

6.7 The findings of the FFM in relation to these two incidents are as follows.

6.8 The FFM concludes that sarin was very likely used as a chemical weapon in the south of Ltamenah on 24 March 2017.

6.9 The FFM determined that chlorine was released from cylinders through mechanical impact. The FFM concluded that chlorine was very likely used as a chemical weapon at Ltamenah hospital and the surrounding area on 25 March 2017.

Annexes (English only):

Annex 1:Reference Documentation

Annex 2:Open Sources

Annex 3:Evidence Obtained by the FFM

Annex 1

REFERENCE DOCUMENTATION

	Document Reference	Full title of Document
1.	QDOC/INS/SOP/IAU01 (Issue 1, Revision 1)	Standard Operating Procedure for Evidence Collection, Documentation, Chain-of-Custody and Preservation during an Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical Weapons
2.	QDOC/INS/WI/IAU05 (Issue 1, Revision 2)	Work Instruction for Conducting Interviews during an Investigation of Alleged Use
3.	QDOC/INS/SOP/IAU02 (Issue 1, Revision 0)	Standard Operating Procedure Investigation of Alleged Use (IAU) Operations
4.	QDOC/INS/SOP/GG011 (Issue 1, Revision 0)	Standard Operating Procedure for Managing Inspection Laptops and other Confidentiality Support Materials
5.	QDOC/LAB/SOP/OSA2 (Issue 1, Revision 2)	Standard Operating Procedure for Off-Site Analysis of Authentic Samples
6.	QDOC/LAB/WI/CS01 (Issue 1, Revision 2)	Work Instruction for Handling of Authentic Samples from Inspection Sites and Packing Off-Site Samples at the OPCW Laboratory
7.	QDOC/LAB/WI/OSA3 (Issue 2, Revision 1)	The chain of custody and documentation for OPCW samples on-site
8.	QDOC/LAB/WI/OSA4 (Issue 1, Revision 3)	Work Instruction for Packing of Off-Site Samples

Annex 2

OPEN SOURCES

Open source internet links related to the Al Lataminah incident
• http://acloserlookonsyria.shoutwiki.com/wiki/Alleged_Chemical_Attacks,_March_25-April_3,_2017 • http://eaworldview.com/2017/03/syria-daily-the-battle-for-qomhana-in-hama-province/#latamneh • http://libyancivilwar.blogspot.nl/2017/03/syria-chlorine-allegations-march-25.html • http://syria.liveuamap.com/en/2017/25-march-drshajulislam-patients-and-doctors-dying-from-gas • http://syriadirect.org/news/surgeon-killed-dozens-injured-in-suspected-north-hama-%E2%80%98chlorine-gas%E2%80%99-attack/ • http://www.shaam.org/news/syria-news/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%AD%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%B5%D9%81-%D9%85%D8%B4%D9%81%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%86%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D9%80-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%85-%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%B4%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A8-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%B4-%D8%A7%D8%AE%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%A7.html • http://www.shaam.org/news/syria-news/الدرويش-علي-الطبيب-واستشهاد-السام-الكلور-به-اللطامنة-مشفى-تقصف-المر رحيات-اختناقا.html • https://shamna-news.com/?p=7543 • https://syrianpc.com/فصف-على-مشفى-اللطامنة-بريف-حماة-الشمال/ • https://twitter.com/DrShajulIslam/status/845694091958648832 • https://twitter.com/Ibrahimmohamd/status/845695286559289344 • https://twitter.com/SyriaCivilDef/status/845712375462420480/photo/1?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.bellingcat.com%2Fnews%2Fmena%2F2017%2F10%2F09%2Fsummary-open-source-evidence-march-25th-2017-chlorine-attack-al-lataminah-hama%2F • https://twitter.com/ZouhirAlShimale/status/845736156402716672 • https://www.bellingcat.com/news/mena/2017/10/09/summary-open-source-evidence-march-25th-2017-chlorine-attack-al-lataminah-hama/ • https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/139017 • https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ArZOQOlhswc&feature=youtu.be • https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=blqik-GJzcM • https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSDRyOSdU6I • https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RpA07JqCrMY

Annex 3

EVIDENCE OBTAINED BY THE FFM

The table below summarises the list of physical evidence collected from various sources by the FFM. It is split into electronic evidence stored in electronic media storage devices such as USB sticks and micro SD cards, hard copy evidence and samples. Electronic files include audio-visual captions, still images and documents. Hardcopy files consist of various documents including drawings made by witnesses. The table also shows the list of samples collected from various sources including; environmental samples including gravel and soil and other samples including metal pieces and fragments.

TABLE 1: PHYSICAL EVIDENCE COLLECTED BY THE TEAM

Entry Number	Evidence description	Evidence reference number	Evidence source
Electronic and hard copy files and documents			
1.	Kingston 16GB SD Card - Video recording	20170410130101	Handed over by 1301
2.	Kingston 4GB µSD Card - Audio recording	20170410130102	Handed over by 1301
3.	Admittance papers – 33 pages	20170410130103	Handed over by 1301
4.	Kingston 8GB µSD Card - 4 videos, 15 photos	20170410130104	Handed over by 1301
5.	Kingston 16GB SD Card and 32 32GB µSD Card - Video recordings	20170728139201	Handed over by 1392
6.	Kingston 32GB µSD Card - Audio recording	20170728139202	Handed over by 1392
7.	Kingston 16GB SD Card - 1 pdf files	20170728139203	Handed over by 1392
8.	Drawing – 1 page	20170728139204	Handed over by 1392
9.	Kingston 16GB SD Card - Video recordings	20170812139601	Handed over by 1396
10.	Kingston 4GB µSD Card - Audio recording	20170812139602	Handed over by 1396
11.	Kingston 32GB µSD Card – 54 files	20170812139603	Handed over by 1396
12.	Drawing – 1 page	20170812139603	Handed over by 1396
13.	Kingston 32GB µSD Card - Video recording	20170729139801	Handed over by 1398

Entry Number	Evidence description	Evidence reference number	Evidence source
14.	Kingston 32GB µSD Card - Audio recording	20170729139802	Handed over by 1398
15.	Drawing – 1 page	20170729139803	Handed over by 1398
16.	Kingston 16GB SD Card - Video recording	20170729139901	Handed over by 1399
	Samples		
1	Dr. Ali Darwish Scrubs: Trousers	20170410130104	Handed over by 1301
2	Dr. Ali Darwish Scrubs: Shirt	20170410130105	Handed over by 1301
3	Samples of chlorine casualties clothing: Hospital scrubs	20170410130106	Handed over by 1301
4	Samples of chlorine casualties clothing: Shirt	20170410130107	Handed over by 1301
5	Samples of chlorine casualties clothing: Shirt	20170410130108	Handed over by 1301
6	Metal fragments from the barrel remnants	20170410130109	Handed over by 1301
7	Soil samples from Latamneh hospital	20170410130110	Handed over by 1301
8	Soil Sample	20170410130111	Handed over by 1301
9	Soil Sample	20170410130112	Handed over by 1301
10	Paper sample, 50m away from impact point	20170412135101	Syria Civil Defence
11	Concrete, 50m away	20170412135102	Syria Civil Defence
12	Water next to barrel	20170412135103	Syria Civil Defence
13	Water next to barrel	20170412135104	Syria Civil Defence
14	Wipe from outer barrel	20170412135105	Syria Civil Defence
15	Blanket	20170412135111	Syria Civil Defence
16	Scissors from operation room (Sharp Object)	20170412135112	Syria Civil Defence
17	Surgical tools from operation room (Sharp Objects)	20170412135113	Syria Civil Defence

Entry Number	Evidence description	Evidence reference number	Evidence source
18	Clothes from OR, 150m away	20170412135114	Syria Civil Defence
19	Soil from next to the barrel	20170412135115	Syria Civil Defence
20	Mud next to the 2nd barrel	20170412135116	Syria Civil Defence
21	Soil 50m away from 2nd barrel	20170412135117	Syria Civil Defence
22	Soil 150m	20170412135118	Syria Civil Defence
23	Civil Defence Uniform: Pants	20170412135119	Syria Civil Defence
24	Civil Defence Uniform: Jacket	20170412135120	Syria Civil Defence

TABLE 2: ELECTRONIC EVIDENCE COLLECTED BY THE TEAM

Interview Number	Folder Location	File Names			
1301	D:\ 1301\Evidence1301	WhatsApp Image 2017-04-10 at 15.30.02 (1)		WhatsApp Image 2017-04-10 at 15.30.08 (1)	
		WhatsApp Image 2017-04-10 at 15.30.02		WhatsApp Image 2017-04-10 at 15.30.08	
		WhatsApp Image 2017-04-10 at 15.30.03 (1)		WhatsApp Image 2017-04-10 at 15.30.10 (1)	
		WhatsApp Image 2017-04-10 at 15.30.03		WhatsApp Image 2017-04-10 at 15.30.10	
		WhatsApp Image 2017-04-10 at 15.30.04		WhatsApp Image 2017-04-10 at 15.30.11	
		WhatsApp Image 2017-04-10 at 15.30.05		WhatsApp Video 2017-04-10 at 15.30.09 (1)	
		WhatsApp Image 2017-04-10 at 15.30.06 (1)		WhatsApp Video 2017-04-10 at 15.30.09	
		WhatsApp Image 2017-04-10 at 15.30.06		WhatsApp Video 2017-04-10 at 15.30.11	
		WhatsApp Image 2017-04-10 at 15.30.07 (1)		WhatsApp Video 2017-04-10 at 16.08.06	
		WhatsApp Image 2017-04-10 at 15.30.07			
1392	D:\1392\1392 Evidence	(تقرير صادر عن مديرية صحة حماه حول استهداف مشفى اللطامنة بغاز الكلور 25-3-2017 (1			
1396	D:\1396\1396 Evidence\Removable Disk	link on you (filename)			
	D:\1396\1396 Evidence\Removable Disk\ كيماوي مشفى اللطامنة صور +فيديوهات	أخبار عربية - إشتباه (5) باستخدام الكيمياوي ضد مستشفى اللطامنة في #حماة - YouTube	شهادة احد المصابين الذين كانو بالمشفى	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (14	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (27
		عشرات الإصابات (5) جراء قصف بالغازات السامة - على مدينة اللطامنة بحماة YouTube	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (1	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (15	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (28
		لحظة إلقاء الطيران (5) المروحي براميل غاز الكلور على مشفى اللطامنة - وخروجه عن الخدمة YouTube	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (2	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (16	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (29
		للمرة الثالثة على (5) التوالي طيران النظام يقصف بغاز الكلور بلدة اللطامنة YouTube - بريف حماة	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (3	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (17	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (30

Interview Number	Folder Location	File Names			
		نافذة تفاعلية .. طائرات النظام تستهدف مدينة اللطامنة بريف حماة بمواد كيميائية - YouTube(1) (5)	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (4	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (18	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (31
		نظام الأسد يقصف المدنيين بريف حماة بغاز كيماوي سام أعراضه شديدة و يعمل على ارتخاء الأعصاب - YouTube (5)	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (5	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (19	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (32
		IMG-20170330-WA0112	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (6	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (20	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (33
		IMG-20170330-WA0115	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (7	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (21	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (34
		IMG-20170330-WA0116	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (8	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (22	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (35
		VID-20170324-WA0053	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (9	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (23	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (36
		VID-20170324-WA0056	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (10	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (24	(كادر المشفى المصاب (1
		VID-20170330-WA0097	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (11	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (25	(كادر المشفى المصاب (2
		VID-20170330-WA0099	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (12	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (26	(كادر المشفى المصاب (3
		تقرير مشفى اللطامنة قصفه بغاز الكلور	صور لكادر المشفى والبراميل داخل المشفى التي (تحوي غاز الكلور (13		

United Nations S/2018/621

Security Council

Distr.: General
21 June 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 20 June 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I am writing to inform you that the Coalition to the Restore Legitimacy in Yemen is launching a new initiative aimed at increasing humanitarian and relief assistance through Hudaydah port, to reach all areas liberated from the Iran-sponsored Houthi militias. This initiative will comprise the provision of food, medical supplies, housing, oil products and other basic needs to the inhabitants of Hudaydah Governorate, via sea bridges between Jazan and Abu Dhabi ports to Hudaydah. In order for this initiative to succeed, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates appeal to the international community, in particular the United Nations, international humanitarian organizations and their partners, to cooperate to speed up the delivery of relief assistance to Yemen through Hudaydah port and all other available crossings.

In this regard, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia condemns in the strongest terms the flagrant violations committed by the Houthi militias in Hudaydah port, including barring the delivery of international assistance and confiscating and looting the contents of vessels awaiting discharge outside the docks of the port. The Houthi militias have looted and destroyed 65 ships and trucks transmitting humanitarian aid and have planted anti-personnel mines in civilian areas to further constrict the delivery of humanitarian assistance, then sold the goods that they had looted on the black market at inflated prices owing to the artificial supply shortages that they purposefully created. Such criminal practices by Houthi militias, including the destruction of the remnants of service facilities in Hudaydah Governorate and in Yemen at large, have exacerbated the humanitarian crisis in the Governorate of Hudaydah, as confirmed by numerous reports indicating that the humanitarian crisis in Yemen is the most severe in areas under Houthi militia control.

The King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre and the Emirates Red Crescent will continue to cooperate to provide all possible support and facilities to alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people. As part of these efforts, a hospital in Hudaydah is currently being rehabilitated with Saudi assistance worth SRI 1,914,554. In addition, the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre has partnered with the World Health Organization on a programme worth $17.6 million to provide Hudaydah Governorate with 8,090 food baskets monthly for three months, to be implemented imminently. Overall, the members of the Coalition to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen have spent $16 billion on humanitarian assistance to Yemen since 2015, in such fields as nutritional assistance, medical care, housing, social

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support, education, refugee support and economic support, including depositing funds into the Central Bank of Yemen.

My delegation requests the circulation of the present letter as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Abdallah Y. **Al-Mouallimi**
Permanent Representative

United Nations S/2018/622

Security Council

Distr.: General
25 June 2018
English
Original: Russian

Letter dated 20 June 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith information bulletins from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic for 19 and 20 June 2018 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) D. **Polyanskiy**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 20 June 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (19 June 2018)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The situation in the de-escalation areas has been assessed as stable.

The Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported two incidents of gunfire in Aleppo Governorate.

The Turkish representative office has not reported any incidents of gunfire.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

The Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has not carried out any humanitarian operations over the past 24 hours.

In total, 1,838 humanitarian operations have been carried out. The total weight of humanitarian cargo delivered is 2,648.56 tons.

Over the past 24 hours, medical assistance has been provided to 20 residents.

In total, medical assistance has been provided to 83,481 residents.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, one ceasefire agreement has been signed with Kafr Abid in Aleppo Governorate.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process has increased to 2,516.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 234.

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (20 June 2018)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The situation in the de-escalation areas has been assessed as stable.

The Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported eight incidents of gunfire in the following Governorates: four in Ladhiqiyah, two in Aleppo and two in Hama.

The Turkish representative office has not reported any incidents of gunfire.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over the past 24 hours, the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has carried out two humanitarian operations: one in Halabiyah, Aleppo Governorate (650 food parcels with a total weight of 2.8 tons were delivered to people in need); and one in Siqba, Rif Dimashq Governorate (650 food parcels with a total weight of 2.8 tons were delivered to people in need).

In total, 1,840 humanitarian operations have been carried out. The total weight of humanitarian cargo delivered is 2,654.16 tons.

Over the past 24 hours, medical assistance has been provided to 173 residents.

In total, medical assistance has been provided to 83,654 residents.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

No ceasefire agreements have been signed over the past 24 hours.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process is 2,516.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 234.

United Nations S/2018/623*

Security Council

Distr.: General
21 June 2018

Original: English

Comprehensive approach to mine action

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. Security Council resolution 2365 (2017), adopted on 30 June 2017, was the first stand-alone resolution on mine action. Its adoption by the Council reaffirmed the criticality of mine action to the peace and security agenda, humanitarian emergency response and sustainable development while also recognizing the positive contribution that mine action makes to stabilization and sustaining peace.

2. The present report is submitted pursuant to the request, made by the Security Council in resolution 2365 (2017), that the Secretary-General report on the implementation of the resolution within a year. It provides an overview of the United Nations response to the threat posed by landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices, and of significant developments and trends in mine action. Covering the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 April 2018, the report draws on data and analysis provided by the United Nations Mine Action Service and other parts of the United Nations system, including peace operations, as well as by Member States.

II. Significant developments and trends

3. Instruments of international law continued to provide a bulwark against the proliferation of explosive weapons during the reporting period. Afghanistan ratified the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects and the five Protocols thereto, in particular Protocol V, which establishes a State's responsibility to assist with the clearance of explosive remnants of war resulting from a conflict in which it participated. The State of Palestine became the ninety-fourth High Contracting Party to Protocol V, while Benin and Sri Lanka joined the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The universalization of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, an important cornerstone of international humanitarian law, was bolstered by the joining of Sri Lanka and the State of Palestine in December 2017, which brought the number of States parties to an encouraging 164. On 18 September 2017, Algeria destroyed its last anti-personnel landmines, fulfilling its obligation under the Convention.

* Reissued for technical reasons on 12 July 2018.

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4. Unfortunately, active conflicts continue to add to the existing contamination of land with explosives, offsetting the clearance efforts of the United Nations, Member States, non-governmental organizations and other partners. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines, in its publication *Landmine Monitor 2017*, recorded 8,605 casualties from mines, explosive remnants of war and victim-operated improvised explosive devices, more than twice as many as the 2014 figure.[1] At least 2,089 of those casualties were killed. The total comprised mostly casualties recorded in armed conflicts in Afghanistan, Libya, Ukraine and Yemen. Given the severity of the conflicts in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic and the difficulty of gathering accurate data during active conflicts, it is probable that the actual number of casualties is much higher.

5. It is not known exactly how many improvised explosive devices are emplaced or produced. However, improvised explosive devices are responsible for the recent worldwide rise in casualties from explosive ordnance. *Landmine Monitor 2017* recorded 1,805 casualties from victim-operated improvised explosive devices, which are explosive weapons produced in an improvised manner and designed to explode from the presence, proximity or contact of their victim. That represents the highest annual total of such casualties since *Monitor* reporting began in 1999.[2] Moreover, research suggests that victims of improvised explosive devices are several times more likely to die or suffer multiple amputations than landmine victims.[3] In 2017, Afghanistan experienced a monthly average of 170 victims of mines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices — its highest recorded monthly average since 2001. In particular, the overwhelming majority of victims of explosive remnants of war were children. Victim-operated improvised explosive devices were responsible for 10 per cent of all civilian casualties in Afghanistan.

6. I continue to be alarmed at the urbanization of armed conflict, with the majority of civilian casualties from the indiscriminate use of explosive devices now occurring in urban centres. Residential areas in several affected States continue to be littered with vast amounts of explosive remnants of war, including improvised explosive devices. In Iraq, the density, complexity, variety and quantity of explosive remnants of war, including unexploded ordnance and improvised explosive devices, encountered in Mosul, particularly the Old City, is unprecedented. Until this unconscionable level of contamination is cleared, urgent humanitarian response efforts will be hampered and civilians cannot safely return home. Given the extent of contamination and the amount of rubble and debris, it is estimated that the clearance process will take at least 10 years to complete.

7. Hostilities in the Syrian Arab Republic, which is suffering one of the most devastating conflicts of modern times, continued unabated during the reporting period. Between January 2015 and February 2018, an average of 162 explosives incidents per day were reported in the country. Nearly half of all conflict-related injuries in the Syrian Arab Republic resulted from such incidents[4]. Explosive weapons continued to be used indiscriminately and systematically in populated urban and rural areas, particularly affecting internally displaced persons and those voluntarily returning to unsafe areas. The decontamination of those areas from unexploded ordnance and improvised explosive devices is a vital first step in making villages and cities safe for return. Limited access to communities in need, caused in part by ongoing hostilities in the country and the presence of explosive ordnance, impeded

[1] See http://www.the-monitor.org/media/2615219/Landmine-Monitor-2017_final.pdf.

[2] Ibid.

[3] See http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/bmjopen/7/7/e014697.full.pdf.

[4] See "Physical rehabilitation needs and services for persons with injuries and disabilities", Humanity and Inclusion, issue brief — Syria (April 2018), available at https://hi.org/sn_uploads/content/HI_IssueBrief_Syria_-_REHABILITATION_april2018.pdf.

mine action responses and forced humanitarian organizations to suspend activities on multiple occasions to ensure the safety of their personnel.

8. The ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine has led to widespread explosives contamination in that part of the country, posing a significant risk to the population. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights noted that during the period from 16 August 2017 to 15 February 2018, more than twice as many civilians were killed by remaining explosives as were killed owing to active hostilities.[5]

9. Even when active hostilities decrease in intensity, and for years and often decades after they have ceased, landmines and explosive remnants of war continue to pose a threat to civilians. For example, despite the fact that a ceasefire was signed in Cambodia more than 25 years ago, 2017 was the first year to witness a full month without any recorded casualties from landmines or unexploded ordnance.

10. The impact of landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices is not limited to civilians. Peacekeeping operations are increasingly mandated to operate in dangerous and complex environments. In November 2017, I appointed Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz (retired) of Brazil to propose practical and effective recommendations to reduce the number of fatalities and injuries among peacekeeping personnel. Significantly, in his report, he highlighted the fact that the use of small arms, improvised explosive devices, vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices and landmines resulted in the majority of fatalities among peacekeepers.

11. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) operates in an asymmetrical threat environment in which United Nations peacekeepers and Malian defence and security forces are regularly targeted with improvised explosive devices. Since 2014, MINUSMA has had the highest fatality rates of any United Nations peace operation, which has prompted the Mission to adopt a more robust posture and implement a series of measures to enhance its ability to deter and counter the threats. The complexity of attacks and the quantity of explosives used in Mali increased in 2017, and the emplacement methods have become more effective; those trends are likely to worsen in the future. A notable spike in the monthly rate of improvised explosive device incidents in Mali since November 2017 could, if sustained, see the number of incidents in 2018 nearly double compared with the previous year. While improvised explosive device attacks are targeted principally at security forces, the number of civilian victims has been increasing steadily as the threat has moved into the more populated areas of central Mali.

III. Implementation of Security Council resolution 2365 (2017)

12. In resolution 2365 (2017), the Security Council expressed grave concern over the serious and lasting threat posed by landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices not only to civilians, but also to peacekeeping and humanitarian personnel. Seeking action, the Council called upon Member States, the United Nations system, relevant institutions and other stakeholders to continue making progress in protecting civilians, increasing the threat mitigation capacity of peacekeepers, enhancing mandate planning and delivery, sustaining peace, strengthening national capacities and promoting effective partnerships. This section highlights efforts made in the implementation of the resolution during the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 April 2018.

[5] See OHCHR quarterly reports on the human rights situation in Ukraine, available at http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/ENACARegion/Pages/UAReports.aspx.

Protection of civilians

13. Preventing and resolving conflicts and building sustainable peace are my overarching priorities for the protection of civilians. Where preventing conflict or sustaining peace fails, we must make every effort to protect the lives, human rights and dignity of civilians caught up in conflict or its aftermath. Mine action protects civilians by mitigating the threat posed by landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices, including by assessing the risks of such devices and clearing their homes and communities, providing risk education and raising risk mitigation awareness, assisting victims with services and rehabilitation and making roads accessible again to communities and for the voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons.

14. The Territory of Western Sahara, where both sides of the 1,465-km berm that divides the area are contaminated with landmines and explosive remnants of war, remains one of the most heavily mined areas in the world. During the reporting period, the Mine Action Service cleared contamination from more than 5 km^2 of land, enabling the nomadic and local populations living in the area to move freely with their livestock and allowing United Nations military observers to monitor the ceasefire between the Royal Moroccan Army and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro Military Forces.

15. By prioritizing survey and clearance activities, peace operations serve to protect civilians by removing the immediate threat as well as by enabling the mobility of mission personnel, including peacekeeping troops. The United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei cleared more than 360 km of roads during the reporting period, allowing for more patrols by peacekeepers and facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Cleared land allowed the mission to establish additional peacekeeping bases and team sites, thereby increasing its ability to achieve mandate objectives. As a result, a more robust mission presence contributed to a decrease in the number of violent incidents.

16. Clearance is also a key activity in the process of liquidating peacekeeping operations. As the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) was drawing down in advance of its closure on 15 October 2017, the Mine Action Service was called upon to destroy the expired and unserviceable ammunition of repatriating military and police units, and to clear a site that had been used for the demolition of expired ammunition and explosives. That support was essential for MINUSTAH to ensure future use of the site without risk to civilians. Similar action undertaken for the closure of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire on 30 June 2017 led to the inclusion of such necessary support in the Department of Field Support mission liquidation manual.

17. In areas where hostilities are ongoing or clearance activities have not yet been completed, the risk posed to civilians by explosive remnants of war can be reduced by making the population aware of the threat and encouraging behaviour that reduces the risk to people, property and the environment. In Somalia during the reporting period, 50 new community liaison officers were deployed to deliver risk education messages promoting safe behaviour in areas where civilians are at risk. Those officers, of whom 60 per cent were recruited from at-risk youth and 9 per cent were female, reached civilians, including humanitarian workers and State officials, in 263 communities. Of those receiving risk education, 40 per cent were female.

18. In Darfur, risk education teams reached out to local communities in village squares, places of worship, schools and camps for internally displaced persons. Children were specifically targeted, as they constitute the majority of casualties from explosives. To reach nomads, who are particularly vulnerable to the threat posed by

explosive ordnance, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) also provided risk education along traditional grazing routes. In total, risk education teams in Darfur conducted 1,685 separate sessions, reaching more than 100,000 persons since July 2017, including 22,500 men, 20,000 women, 35,000 boys and 28,500 girls. An additional 500,000 persons, of whom more than 47 per cent were children, were educated by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and partners in Cameroon, Chad, the Niger and Nigeria, which are affected by the Boko Haram terrorist group. UNICEF also provided risk education to more than 1.8 million civilians in Yemen, which has recently seen large-scale contamination with explosive remnants of war.

19. For displaced persons, multiple exposures to accurate information on explosive threats are needed well in advance of any decision to return home. Mine action actors in Iraq coordinated the content of risk education materials within the mine action area of responsibility of the Protection Cluster as well as with the Government of Iraq, to ensure that the messaging delivered was consistent while avoiding duplication of efforts. Where access to education is delineated by gender, the Mine Action Service works specifically with female risk education volunteers to spread lifesaving educational messages to women, who play a critical role in instilling safe behaviour among their children and peers.

20. The United Nations supports Member States in integrating victim assistance into broader national policies, plans and legal frameworks related to disability, health, education, employment, development and the reduction of poverty. In Libya, the Mine Action Service coordinated with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to organize the first workshop on victim assistance for Libya, held in Tunis in July 2017. Libyan and international stakeholders from the health, education and mine action sectors discussed their strategies, roles and responsibilities to address the needs of people injured by explosive weapons in the country, leading to a commitment by the Libyan Mine Action Centre to facilitate the development of a Libyan-owned victim assistance strategy.

21. The United Nations also provides support to victims of landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices, as well as to their families and communities. UNAMID partnered with a local non-governmental organization to identify 50 victims for targeted assistance with income generation and social reintegration in Darfur, including by setting up small-scale commercial activities such as grocery shops, animal husbandry and water vending. Improving the socioeconomic position of survivors helps to reintegrate victims into their communities by enabling them to contribute to the economic development of their societies, in keeping with the imperative of the Sustainable Development Goals to "leave no one behind".

Protecting peacekeepers

22. More than 100,000 men and women working in United Nations peace operations risk their lives to improve those of others. In 2017, 59 of them lost their lives as a result of malicious acts involving the use of explosive devices, and 150 more were injured. Ensuring the safety of peacekeeping personnel must be a top priority, and providing them with the right training, knowledge and equipment to mitigate the threat posed by explosive weapons is an important part of that commitment.

23. In Mali, MINUSMA has sustained more than 350 casualties since its creation in 2013, of whom 65 were killed as a result of attacks using explosives, which have increasingly included improvised explosive devices. To better prepare troops for operations in a high explosive threat environment, the Mine Action Service has implemented a comprehensive improvised explosive device threat mitigation framework. It consists of tailored predeployment and in-theatre training and

mentoring, technical and strategic advice and the provision of specialized equipment, including metal detectors with ground-penetrating technology, remotely operated robots and mine-protected vehicles. To strengthen capacity among troop-contributing countries and promote sustainability, during the reporting period more than 100 national experts were trained to deliver predeployment training. Once deployed, troops continue to receive specialized in-theatre training and mentoring to support the gradual application of the required tactics, techniques and procedures. This comprehensive approach has helped to reduce the rate of MINUSMA casualties from improvised explosive devices by 50 per cent since 2016. It has also increased the ability of MINUSMA troops to detect improvised explosive devices before detonation, from a device detection rate of 11 per cent in 2014 to a rate of 40 per cent in the first months of 2018. With MINUSMA remaining the most frequently targeted mission, these efforts save lives and improve mission mobility and mandate implementation.

24. In Somalia, comprehensive threat mitigation efforts have also yielded positive effects. During the reporting period, the Mine Action Service trained more than 15,000 troops of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in improvised explosive device threat mitigation and another 800 troops in specialized search techniques, thereby increasing the capacity of AMISOM to operate in high-risk environments. The Mine Action Service also provided specialized equipment, including metal detectors and explosive ordnance disposal suits. Advisory materials distributed in Amharic, English, French and Somali reached peacekeepers in more than 100 field locations, and AMISOM teams surveyed more than 6,000 km of roads. Civilians as well as peacekeepers throughout the AMISOM area of operations were protected through the searching and securing of 680 buildings and 13 km^2 of open area during the reporting period, including with the help of 34 explosive detection dogs. This package of measures contributed to the decline in the number of AMISOM casualties per improvised explosive device incident from 2.42 in 2015 to 1.26 in 2016 and 1.10 in 2017.

25. In the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), where landmines and other explosive remnants of war continue to pose a threat to peacekeepers, the mission safely disposed of more than 1,000 anti-personnel mines during the reporting period and provided safety briefings to approximately 600 United Nations military and civilian personnel. Nearly 4,000 members of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) received similar training.

Mine action in United Nations response planning and reporting

26. United Nations operations are quicker and more effective, and lives are saved, when the threat posed by landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices is considered from the earliest stages of planning and programming. In Darfur, UNAMID and the United Nations country team have jointly prepared for the return of internally displaced persons and refugees, including through the surveying and clearance of explosive remnants of war from abandoned areas. This practice has served to protect those coming back to their homes and has validated the concept of safe return for those still waiting to go back. During the reporting period, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) also consistently included provisions for mine action in planning the establishment and closure of operating bases and protection-of-civilians sites, ensuring the surveying and clearance of the areas and improving the safety of future occupants.

27. The threat posed by mines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices, and the need for mine action, were reflected in the majority of relevant Humanitarian Response Plans in 2017 and 2018. Clearance facilitated humanitarian

access to populations in need, and risk education was delivered to more than 80 per cent of targeted beneficiaries in both Afghanistan and the Syrian Arab Republic. Data on explosives contamination assists in defining protection needs, and detailed information on known explosives contamination, where available, enables the humanitarian community to gain critical situational awareness, which increases the safety of its activities.

28. The Government of Libya and the United Nations have fully integrated mine action into their consultations on the United Nations strategic framework for the biennium 2019–2020 as part of a renewed partnership towards a more sustainable path to development, prosperity, peace and security. Mine action considerations have also been taken into account in the preparation of the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2018 and the planning of emergency assistance in the country.

29. Reporting on the scale of the problem and the activities undertaken to address it has been incorporated into periodic reports to the Security Council on peacekeeping operations and special political missions, as well as thematic reports such as those on the protection of civilians. Information on incidents and threat mitigation activities is broken down by location, gender and age where possible, to provide for a better understanding of the impact on the population and better prioritization of clearance activities and risk education.

Sustaining peace

30. In 2016, in General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016), the twin resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture, Member States stressed that sustaining peace was imperative to preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict. Mine action programmes, by facilitating the reconstruction of public services, fostering sustainable development and preventing weapons and explosive material from being harvested for use by armed groups, are an essential first step towards an environment of peace and stability, underscoring the criticality of mine action to the security-development nexus.

31. Mine action allows for progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by contributing to peaceful and inclusive societies and effective institutions (Goal 16.1) as well as accelerating progress towards the achievement of several others of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The cultivation of contaminated land, to alleviate poverty and prevent hunger (Goals 1 and 2), can occur only after that land has been cleared of explosive remnants of war. Children in post-conflict settings can return to school to receive a quality education (Goal 4) only after explosives contamination has been removed. Access to clean water and affordable energy (Goals 6 and 7) have a chance only if relevant infrastructure is made safe before it is restored to working order. In recognition of the role that mine action plays to support sustainable development, I welcome efforts by affected States, including Afghanistan and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, to adopt a mine-action-specific national goal or indicator.

32. By providing quick peace dividends to conflict-affected communities, mine action leads to critical confidence- and trust-building, even across conflict lines. Given the impact of mine action as an early post-conflict gain, it is essential that consideration be given to it, including relevant mine action provisions, in peace agreements during the earliest stages of negotiations. In the 2016 Agreement on the Bilateral and Definitive Ceasefire and the Cessation of Hostilities and the Laying down of Arms between the Government of Colombia and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo demining was recognized as a prerequisite for post-conflict rural development and as possible employment for

ex-combatants undergoing socioeconomic reintegration. With support from the United Nations and other partners, including through the Peacebuilding Fund, the demining organization Humanicemos Desminado Humanitario increased its capacity to reintegrate ex-combatants through employment in the mine action sector. The project is aimed at reintegrating up to 146 people, with women accounting for 20 per cent of participants. Helping to remove the landmines that they participated in laying is also a notable way for ex-combatants to provide reparation to victims.

33. During the reporting period, the United Nations facilitated talks and other contacts between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities on a settlement agreement. As part of a package of confidence-building measures, the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus cleared priority minefields agreed to by the leaders of both sides, highlighting the positive role that mine action plays in building confidence between parties negotiating peace agreements. The Mine Action Service provided training and advice on areas contaminated with landmines and explosive remnants of war and on assistance in metal detection to members of the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus, enabling the Committee to contribute to the overall process of reconciliation between the two communities in a safe manner.

34. Mine action in the Central African Republic has facilitated the implementation by MINUSCA of community violence reduction and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes with armed groups, in support of the political process, through the safe destruction of weapons and ammunition. The Mine Action Service supported the Central African national authorities, through the provision of infrastructure and training, in safely managing and storing weapons and ammunition. Such support is critical to facilitating the progressive redeployment of the defence and internal security forces throughout the country and paving the way for the eventual exit strategy of the United Nations peacekeeping presence. This increased national capacity was a deciding factor in the approval of requests for exemptions to the arms embargo, pursuant to Security Council resolution 2399 (2018), that were submitted to the Security Council during the reporting period.

Strengthening national capacity

35. The safety and security of civilians is the responsibility of Member States, and the United Nations assists Member States where requested in building their mine action capacity to fulfil that responsibility.

36. In Afghanistan, the United Nations has worked to enhance the technical and support capacity and strategic direction and coordination functions of the national Directorate of Mine Action Coordination. With the transfer of more than 100 United Nations national staff to the Directorate, it now has the capacity to manage the Afghan mine action programme. The United Nations now plays a supporting role, providing technical and management advice and assisting the Directorate in developing national mine action standards in line with the International Mine Action Standards, to which all government implementing partners must adhere when performing mine action operations in the country.

37. In cooperation with other partners, the United Nations provided essential support for the establishment of an independent and accountable Somali Explosive Management Authority to coordinate, manage and regulate mine action efforts in Somalia. Under the Badbaado (Protection) Plan for explosive-hazard management in Somalia, which is aimed at compliance with the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention by 2022, the Government of Somalia has taken full ownership over the Information Management System for Mine Action and improved its understanding of the impact of explosives contamination on communities.

38. The gradual building of explosive ordnance disposal capacity within the Somali Police Force will be critical in the lead-up to the presidential elections in 2021. The Mine Action Service enhanced the operational capacity of the Somali police during the reporting period by training and advising explosive ordnance disposal personnel in Mogadishu, Kismayo and Dhuusamarreb and by equipping newly trained explosive ordnance disposal teams with robots and specialized suits for explosive ordnance disposal, as well as with vehicles. Assistance in developing a comprehensive weapons and ammunition management system in line with sanctions obligations, including the necessary legal frameworks, policies and procedures, is designed to allow for a partial lifting of the arms embargo currently in place and has allowed the Government of Somalia to improve its reporting to the Security Council.

39. Iraqi mine action authorities, which have a wealth of mine clearance experience, are increasingly focusing on the response to improvised explosive devices, which are frequently found in liberated areas. In Anbar province during the reporting period, the United Nations provided advice and training on the identification, marking and disposal of improvised explosive devices, and the programme is being expanded to Ninawa and Kirkuk provinces. Such capacity is particularly important in areas where people are returning to their houses and communities, serving as a prerequisite for reconstruction and development activities.

Partnership

40. To optimize the results delivered by mine action activities as well as the use of donor funds, the United Nations cooperates with a number of trusted partners at the global and national levels. In February 2018, the Mine Action Service planned and coordinated the 21st annual International Meeting of National Mine Action Programme Directors and United Nations Advisers at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. This annual meeting brings together Member States, national mine action authorities, the United Nations, civil society, academia and the private sector to share best practices, strengthen partnerships and initiate new collaborations. The theme of the meeting, "Advancing protection, peace and development", highlighted the critical role of mine action in humanitarian action, peacebuilding and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

41. Following the signing of a memorandum of understanding by the African Union Commission and the Mine Action Service in April 2017, the United Nations and the African Union further strengthened their partnership in mine action. The United Nations Office to the African Union continued to provide technical guidance for the implementation of the African Union Mine Action and Explosive Remnants of War Strategic Framework and supported the Union's ammunition safety management pilot project, carrying out interventions in Guinea-Bissau and Malawi. The Mine Action Service and the African Union jointly published a safety handbook on landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices, in five languages. The handbook was distributed to African Union member States and to peace support operations in Mali, Somalia, Abyei and Darfur to educate soldiers and raise awareness of the threat posed by explosive devices.

42. In humanitarian emergencies, cooperation between United Nations entities and non-governmental organizations through the mine action area of responsibility of the Global Protection Cluster ensures a more integrated, accountable and effective mine action response. The systematic integration of mine action into humanitarian planning and appeals, where relevant, allows for the factoring of risks related to explosive threats into all humanitarian operations, especially in new emergencies when a country-level area of responsibility may not have yet been activated.

43. In Myanmar, the cooperation of 10 ministries and more than 40 national and international civil society actors and United Nations agencies has led to an environment that is increasingly conducive to mine action as well as enhanced practical coordination. Illustrating the benefits of such coordination for the beneficiaries of mine action activities, the jointly developed mine risk education toolkit has enabled more than 321,000 at-risk persons to be educated through government messaging.

IV. United Nations coherence in mine action

44. The Mine Action Service chairs the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action,[6] ensuring coherent approaches to supporting affected States and joint assessments of threat situations, and mainstreams mine action into broader humanitarian, human rights, disarmament and development frameworks. The Group is currently developing the next strategy for United Nations mine action, which will come into effect on 1 January 2019.

45. United Nations responses in the field also reflect this inter-agency framework for coordination and coherence. In support of stabilization in Iraq, the Mine Action Service, which implements most of its projects through the United Nations Office for Project Services, works closely with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to synchronize mine action taskings with recovery and rehabilitation priorities. Detailed conflict analysis undertaken by UNDP as part of its Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilization ensures that mine action interventions directly support stabilization outcomes. As a result, in liberated areas of Iraq, mine action efforts are centred on the surveying and clearance of key infrastructure sites that facilitate safe return. In the Mopti region of Mali, in response to a spike in the number of improvised explosive device attacks in early 2018, the Mine Action Service provided specific risk awareness training for drivers of humanitarian convoys. The training mitigated the threat of those attacks, lessening their impact on operations and the disruption of vital humanitarian assistance to vulnerable communities.

46. Mine action is also recognized as an integral part of the humanitarian emergency response in the Syrian Arab Republic, where an estimated 8.2 million people live in areas affected by explosives incidents and 13.1 million need humanitarian aid. The mine action subcluster of the Global Protection Cluster brings together 29 mine action partners in regional humanitarian hubs, operating as a forum for the coordination of activities to reduce the impact of explosive devices on civilians and humanitarian workers in the Syrian Arab Republic. For example, during the reporting period, UNICEF and Cluster partners provided risk education to a total of more than 1.3 million beneficiaries, with the majority educated by UNICEF.

47. In Iraq, men make up the majority of casualties from explosive devices, as they are often the first to return to liberated areas and are more likely to be involved in the assessment, clean-up and reconstruction of destroyed buildings. This is just one

[6] The 12 departments and offices of the Secretariat and specialized agencies, funds and programmes that constitute the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action are: the United Nations Mine Action Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, the United Nations Office for Project Services, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization. The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and the World Bank are observers.

example that highlights the need to apply a gender lens in the planning, programming and evaluation of mine action activities. The United Nations Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes provide valuable guidance for field programmes and partners, and I am pleased to note that they are currently being reviewed and updated to ensure that they are well adapted to the new challenges and best practices identified in the field.

48. The Mine Action Service maintains a rapid response and technical support capacity, which deploys experts and specialized equipment to address acute threats or support national counterparts through needs assessments, training and advice at the request of United Nations humanitarian and development entities. In November 2017, at the invitation of the Humanitarian Coordinator, experts were deployed to Burkina Faso to assess the explosive threat associated with Boko Haram in the northern part of that country. The resulting recommendations aimed at reducing the risk will be implemented in 2018, pending the allocation of adequate resources. Experts were also deployed to Afghanistan, Cameroon, Nigeria, South Sudan, the Sudan, the State of Palestine and the Territory of Western Sahara, where they have improved United Nations mine action programme delivery, enhancing coordination with key partners and local authorities and improving their capacity.

United Nations response to the threat posed by improvised explosive devices

49. As noted above, United Nations peacekeepers, Member State security forces and civilians are increasingly targeted by non-State actors using improvised explosive devices, and the United Nations is responding effectively in the field.

50. In addition, at Headquarters, programmatic, operational and technical guidance is being developed to address the threat faced by peacekeeping personnel. The Mine Action Service coordinated the development of the United Nations improvised explosive device disposal standards on the basis of extensive consultations. The standards, which came into effect in June 2018, complement the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Military Unit Manual and the handbook on mitigating threats from improvised explosive devices. Combined, these provide a comprehensive and complementary package of guidance for use in the predeployment and in-mission training of peacekeeping contingents.

51. As part of its capability development project on improvised explosive device survivability, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations is developing an annex to the United Nations Peacekeeping Missions Military Engineer Unit Manual focused on search capability, an improvised explosive device technical exploitation policy and relevant threat mitigation courses.

52. In my initiative "Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament", which I presented on 24 May 2018, I noted the threats posed by improvised explosive devices and their consequences for many areas of work of the United Nations. I support greater coherence in a whole-of-system approach to improvised explosive device threat mitigation. Under the leadership of the Mine Action Service, the United Nations will promote strengthened and coherent inter-agency coordination with respect to improvised explosive devices.

V. Observations

53. Landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices are a deadly threat that persists long after conflict has ended and disproportionately affects civilians. Indiscriminate, these weapons do not distinguish between the boot of a soldier and the foot of a child. The disadvantage and suffering that they cause must never be underestimated.

54. Although their detrimental effects continue to be experienced even in countries where the guns fell silent decades ago, much of the worrisome rise in casualties occurs in countries experiencing active conflict. To reverse the upward trend in casualties from landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices, preventing and resolving conflict and ensuring sustainable development on the basis of respect for human rights must remain our shared priority. Parties to conflict have a special responsibility in this regard.

55. The increased use of improvised explosive devices, combined with higher levels of technological sophistication, constitutes a growing menace to the safety and security of civilians, humanitarian workers and peacekeepers alike. I welcome the completion of the United Nations improvised explosive device disposal standards as an important step to adapt the United Nations response to evolving threats and conduct its interventions in a safer and more cost-effective manner. In my Agenda for Disarmament, I have noted the need for a whole-of-system and coherent approach to improvised explosive devices, to enable the United Nations to be more effective and integrated in its response. As such, the Agenda stipulates that, under the leadership of the Mine Action Service, United Nations entities will promote greater coherence and strengthening of inter-agency coordination on improvised explosive devices. In the same vein, I urge troop-contributing countries to better prepare peacekeepers for the conditions and threats that they face in their deployments. I fully support the action plan to improve the security of peacekeepers, which reflects the commitment to implementing several measures recommended by General Santos Cruz to increase risk awareness, improve training and build the capacity of uniformed personnel to mitigate explosive threats, particularly the threat posed by improvised explosive devices. My initiative "Action for Peacekeeping", announced in March 2018, is aimed at strengthening the mutual commitment of the Secretariat and Member States to addressing these urgent needs.

56. Given the increases in contamination as well as casualties from mines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices, it is paramount that mine action considerations remain at the forefront of any planning efforts with respect to United Nations responses. To ensure its inclusion where relevant, I urge the mainstreaming of mine action into relevant country-specific discussions and the planning and mandates of United Nations responses.

57. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reflects the recognition that peace is paramount for the achievement of development goals. Member States acknowledged that there could be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development. Mine action is a precursor to peace as well as to sustainable development, and has been shown to provide important practical contributions to the building of trust between parties, to the benefit of communities on both sides of conflicts. I urge the inclusion of mine action in ceasefires and peace agreements, where appropriate.

58. I continue to encourage affected Member States to improve their national mine action management, and I encourage them to seek the assistance of the United Nations as well as that of Member States. I thank those Member States that have implemented measures to mitigate the risk posed by explosive devices to their citizens, including

by acceding to or ratifying relevant international instruments, as well as those Member States that have assisted affected States in their mine action efforts.

59. As the upward trend in casualties shows, we cannot afford the luxury of complacency. The Portfolio of Mine Action Projects, which highlights worldwide funding needs for essential activities such as clearance, risk education and victim assistance, has a total funding requirement for 2018 of $661 million. I urge Member States to contribute more to mine action, whether through their own efforts, through political support or through sustainable and predictable contributions to the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action.

60. Security Council resolution 2365 (2017) constitutes an important milestone in our collective struggle to address the threat posed by landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices. Mine action should continue to have a high place on our agenda. I encourage the annual consideration of mine action by the Council, on the basis of a report on the implementation of the resolution.

United Nations S/2018/624

Security Council

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Letter dated 21 June 2018 from the Security Council Facilitator for the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith, as agreed among the representatives of the Security Council for the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015), my six-month report on the implementation of the resolution, which covers the period from 15 December 2017 to 15 June 2018.

I should be grateful if the present letter and the report could be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Karel J.G. **van Oosterom**
Security Council Facilitator for the implementation
of resolution 2231 (2015)

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Please recycle

Fifth six-month report of the Facilitator on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015)

I. Introduction

1. The note by the President of the Security Council of 16 January 2016 (S/2016/44) set forth practical arrangements and procedures for the Council for carrying out tasks related to the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015), in particular with respect to the provisions specified in paragraphs 2 to 7 of annex B to that resolution.

2. In the note, it was established that the Security Council should select, on an annual basis, one member to serve as its facilitator for the functions specified therein. On 2 January 2018, I was appointed as Facilitator for the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) for the period ending 31 December 2018 (see S/2018/2/Rev.1).

3. It was also established in the note that the Facilitator should brief the other members of the Security Council on his or her work and the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) every six months, in parallel with the report submitted by the Secretary-General on the implementation of the resolution.

4. The present report covers the period from 15 December 2017 to 15 June 2018.

II. Summary of the activities of the Security Council in the "2231 format"

5. On 19 December 2017 (see S/PV.8143), the Security Council was briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs on the fourth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) (S/2017/1030); by my predecessor on the work of the Council and the implementation of the resolution (see S/2017/1058); and by the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, on behalf of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, in her capacity as Coordinator of the Joint Commission established in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, on the procurement channel (see S/2017/1009).

6. On the same day, a letter from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General was received by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/1075). The letter transmitted the views of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the fourth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015).

7. The representatives of the Security Council for the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) met in the "2231 format" on 27 April 2018. During the meeting, the Security Council heard a presentation from the Coordinator of the Procurement Working Group of the Joint Commission established in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The Coordinator provided an overview on the procurement channel and the work of the Procurement Working Group. The Secretariat, through the Security Council Affairs Division of the Department of Political Affairs, also provided an update on the administrative support provided to the Council for the processing of proposals through the procurement channel.

8. During the reporting period, a total of 81 notes were circulated in the "2231 format". In addition, I sent 81 official communications to Member States and the Coordinator of the Procurement Working Group. I received a total of 67 communications from Member States and the Coordinator.

9. During the reporting period, there were no changes to the list maintained pursuant to resolution 2231 (2015), which at present, comprises 23 individuals and 61 entities. Since Implementation Day (16 January 2016), no travel or asset freeze exemption request has been submitted.

III. Monitoring the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015)

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

10. In line with paragraph 4 of resolution 2231 (2015), in February and May 2018, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) submitted to the IAEA Board of Governors and, in parallel, to the Security Council, reports on its verification and monitoring activities in the Islamic Republic of Iran in the light of resolution 2231 (2015) (see S/2018/205 and S/2018/540).

11. In both quarterly reports, the Agency affirmed that the Islamic Republic of Iran had not pursued construction of the existing Arak heavy water research reactor (IR-40 reactor) based on its original design; that it had no more than 130 metric tonnes of heavy water; that it had no more than 5,060 IR-1 centrifuges that remained installed in 30 cascades at the Natanz Fuel Enrichment Plant; that it had not enriched uranium above 3.67 per cent U-235; and that it had not conducted any uranium enrichment or related research and development activities at the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant and that there had not been any nuclear material at the plant.

12. The Agency further reported that the Islamic Republic of Iran had continued to permit the Agency to use online enrichment monitors and electronic seals, which communicate their status within nuclear sites to Agency inspectors, and to facilitate the automated collection of Agency measurement recordings registered by installed measurement devices; that it had issued long-term visas to Agency inspectors designated for the Islamic Republic of Iran as requested by the Agency; and that it had provided proper working space for the Agency at nuclear sites and facilitated the use of working space at locations near nuclear sites in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

13. The Agency also reported that the Islamic Republic of Iran continued to provisionally apply the Additional Protocol to its Safeguards Agreement and that the Agency continued its evaluations regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities for the Islamic Republic of Iran, including through the conduct of complementary accesses under the Additional Protocol to all the sites and locations in the Islamic Republic of Iran that it needed to visit. The Agency also reported that it was continuing to verify the non-diversion of declared nuclear material at the nuclear facilities and locations outside facilities where nuclear material had been customarily used, as declared by the Islamic Republic of Iran under its Safeguards Agreement.

14. On 8 May 2018, the President of the United States of America announced the withdrawal of the United States from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and the re-imposition of all United States sanctions that had been lifted or waived in connection with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

15. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran addressed a letter to the Secretary-General on 11 May 2018 (S/2018/453), conveying a letter dated 10 May 2018 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Javad Zarif. In that letter, Minister Zarif described the decision by the United States to withdraw from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action as a "material breach of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015)", and the announced re-imposition of all United States sanctions as "significant non-performance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, and in clear non-compliance with Security Council

resolution 2231 (2015)". The letter further stated that the Islamic Republic of Iran would resort to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action mechanism to determine how the full benefits for the country under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action could be ensured, and urged the United Nations "to keep the United States accountable".

Ballistic missile launches

16. On 23 May 2018, the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed identical letters to the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General (S/2018/495), informing them of the launch of two ballistic missile launches, a Shahab 3 variant and a Scud variant, by the Islamic Republic of Iran on 2 and 5 January, respectively. The letter noted that these activities were in violation of resolution 2231 (2015). In response, the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran addressed a letter to the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General (S/2018/511), in which he rejected the "baseless allegations" against the Islamic Republic of Iran and stated that "none" of its ballistic missiles were capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

Ballistic missiles, arms-related transfers and other transfers

17. On 11 January 2018, the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed a letter to the President of the Security Council in response to a note verbale sent by the Permanent Mission of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations, as reported in paragraph 28 of the previous Facilitator's report (S/2017/1058).

18. The Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed several letters to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council. In those letters, the Permanent Representative referred to the launches of ballistic missiles from Yemeni territory towards Saudi Arabia on 19 December 2017, and on 5, 16 and 20 January, 5 February, 25 March, 11, 12 and 28 April and 9 May 2018 (see S/2017/1133, S/2018/19, S/2018/52, S/2018/55, S/2018/93, S/2018/266, S/2018/337, S/2018/350, S/2018/422 and S/2018/448). He described the missiles to be of Iranian origin, indicated that "Iran's proliferation of ballistic missiles to the Houthi rebel militias is widely evident" and called upon the Security Council to insist on the full and immediate implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) and to support all measures "to stop the continuous supply of weapons and materials to the Houthis by Iran".

19. In response, in identical letters addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/2018/123, S/2018/278, S/2018/424 and S/2018/533), the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran stated that it "has never transferred or smuggled missiles, arms or military equipment to Yemen in violation of Security Council resolutions 2216 (2015) and 2231 (2015)".

20. On 10 February and 13 April 2018, the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed letters to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/2018/111 and S/2018/349). In those letters, the Permanent Representative referred to an "Iranian unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV)", which was described as having been launched into Israeli airspace to attack Israeli territory and intercepted by the Israel Defense Forces. He called upon the Security Council to condemn the act as a breach of resolution 2231 (2015).

21. In response, on 20 February and 9 May 2018, the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed letters to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/2018/142 and S/2018/445). In the former letter, the Permanent Representative stated that the information and accusations contained in the letters of Israel were misleading and that the reference therein to resolution 2231 (2015) was an attempt to weaken the Joint Comprehensive

Plan of Action. In the latter letter, he noted that, according to the information conveyed to the Islamic Republic of Iran, the UAV had been flying inside the Syrian Arab Republic "for the purpose of monitoring and surveillance of ISIL and other terrorist groups".

22. All the above-mentioned letters addressed to the President of the Security Council and/or the Secretary-General were circulated in the "2231 format" of the Council during the reporting period.

IV. Procurement channel approval, notifications and exemptions

23. During the reporting period, 13 new proposals for the supply of items, material, equipment, goods and technology set out in INFCIRC/254/Rev.13/Part 1 or INFCIRC/254/Rev.10/Part 2 were submitted to the Security Council. Eight of those proposals have been approved, two have been withdrawn and three are currently under review.

24. Since Implementation Day, a total of 37 proposals to participate in or permit the activities set forth in paragraph 2 of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015) have been submitted to the Security Council by five Member States from three different regional groups, including States that are not participants in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. To date, of the 34 proposals that have been processed, 24 have been approved, 3 have been disapproved, and 7 have been withdrawn. On average, the proposals were processed through the procurement channel in less than 51 calendar days. After the withdrawal of the United States from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, including the Procurement Working Group, the procurement channel has continued to function and the Joint Commission has continued to review proposals.

25. According to paragraph 2 of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015), certain nuclear-related activities do not require approval but do require a notification to the Security Council or to both the Security Council and the Joint Commission. In this regard, since my last report, eight notifications were submitted to the Security Council in relation to the transfer to the Islamic Republic of Iran of equipment and technology covered by annex B, section 1 of INFCIRC/254/Rev.13/Part 1 intended for light water reactors. In addition, two notifications were submitted to the Council for an activity related to the necessary modification of the two cascades at the Fordow facility for stable isotope production, and two notifications were submitted for an activity related to the modernization of the Arak reactor based on the agreed conceptual design.

26. On 12 June 2018, the Coordinator of the Procurement Working Group transmitted to the Facilitator for the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) the fifth six-month report of the Joint Commission (S/2018/601), in accordance with paragraph 6.10 of annex IV to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

V. Other approval and exemption requests

27. During the reporting period, no proposal was submitted by Member States to the Security Council to participate in and permit the activities set forth in paragraph 4 of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015).

28. During the reporting period, no proposal was submitted by Member States to the Security Council pursuant to paragraph 5 of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015).

29. During the reporting period, no proposal was submitted by Member States to the Security Council pursuant to paragraph 6 (b) of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015).

30. Exemptions to the assets freeze provisions and travel ban provisions are contained in paragraphs 6 (d) and 6 (e), respectively, of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015). No exemption requests were received or granted by the Security Council in relation to the 23 individuals and 61 entities currently on the list maintained pursuant to resolution 2231 (2015).

VI. Transparency, outreach and guidance

31. During the first meeting in the "2231 format" in 2018 and in my introductory remarks as Facilitator, I outlined three areas that the Facilitator's role could actively promote: talks, transparency and trade. This includes facilitating discussion in the "2231 format" related to the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015); facilitating transparency in the work of the Security Council; and encouraging the submission of proposals through the procurement channel, which would contribute to the implementation of the resolution.

32. Further outreach activities by the Secretariat, as mandated in the note by the President of the Security Council of 16 January 2016 (S/2016/44), will continue to foster awareness of resolution 2231 (2015). I also plan to utilize all opportunities as Facilitator to actively promote understanding and knowledge of the resolution and its measures.

33. The website on resolution 2231 (2015), managed and regularly updated by the Secretariat, through the Security Council Affairs Division of the Department of Political Affairs, continues to play a significant role in providing relevant information on the resolution. During the reporting period, the number of unique page views in all official languages of the United Nations was more than 67,000, for a total of more than 193,000 since the creation of the website. I welcome and encourage the Secretariat to regularly maintain, update and improve the website on resolution 2231 (2015) to promote better awareness and information-sharing.

34. In my role as Facilitator, I also held several bilateral consultations with Member States and their representatives, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, to discuss issues relevant to the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015). I am confident that the international community will continue to act in line with paragraph 2 of the resolution, in which the Security Council called upon all Member States, regional organizations and international organizations to take such actions as may be appropriate to support the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.